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THE

HISTORY OF FRANCE

UNDER

THE BOURBONS.

VOL. IV.

THE

HISTORY OF FRANCE

UNDER

THE BOURBONS.

A.D. 1589—1830.

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BY

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THE HISTORY

OF

FRANCE UNDER THE BOURBONS.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

It was impossible for any policy to have been more suicidal in its principles, or more humiliating in its effects than that from which the Government of Louis was thus driven to recede. In its effects it gave the country the appearance of submitting without an effort at resistance to the imperious threats of England. In its principles it had involved the king in engagements with a party which in every country it was for his interest to discountenance. At the time when he was giving aid to the insurgents in North America, his brother-in-law the emperor, though not usually a prince of great sagacity, had refused in any way to co-operate with him, on the ground that, as a sovereign, it was his business to be a royalist everywhere;* and Louis had already found the bad effects of his interference in North America in the encouragement which the success of that great revolt had given to discontent in his own kingdom. But his conduct in Holland in 1787 was but a repetition of the blunder which he had committed in that instance; and a

* "C'est mon métier être royaliste," are said to have been his words.

repetition the more dangerous inasmuch as the field of operations was nearer home.

For this second error, however, M. de Vergennes was no longer responsible. Nor was Calonne. The first was dead; the second was no longer in office. For the first three years he had tried to meet the difficulties of his position by every kind of temporary expedient, only to find them all fail him one after another. Some of them had been not merely ineffective, but mischievous in the highest degree. The produce of some taxes he had endeavoured to augment by taking them in kind; the scheme was found so impracticable that he was soon forced to abandon it; but the attempt had necessarily opened the door to greater peculation than ever on the part of the collectors; and again those peculations were still further encouraged by the extent to which he regularly anticipated the revenue of future years; a practice which he endeavoured to conceal by systematically avoiding the production of any accurate accounts. A further diminution of the yearly revenue was caused by the continued alienation of crown lands, which under his administration had proceeded with almost unexampled rapidity. Unscrupulous as he was in the raising of fresh loans, all that he could raise barely sufficed to pay the yearly increasing interest of the debt; and left the annual deficiency as formidable as ever. At last, as we have seen, the embarrassments of the State grew to such a height as to rouse even him from his indifference. He perceived that the only remedy was to be found not in the imposition of new taxes, but in placing the taxation on a more equitable footing; or, in other words, in abolishing the exemptions claimed by the nobles and clergy. This evil too, like every other, had of late

been growing with great rapidity. Among the expedients for getting money had been the creation of a vast number of new offices; and every office had carried exemption with it. A century before, these immunities, indefensible as they mostly were, had at least been confined to the nobles. But all the offices of modern creation were open to the middle class, to the traders and all those comprised under the general name of the Bourgeoisie. And, as putting them by these exemptions in some sense on a level with the nobles, they were sought by them with incredible avidity; every one the moment that he had saved a little money devoting it to the purchase of a place. The result was, as a pamphlet of the beginning of this reign alleges, that there was not a single parish in the kingdom that had not a number of its inhabitants, and those of course the best able to pay the taxes, legally exempt. A single small town could furnish 235 citizens employed either in the administration or execution of justice; and these could not have been half the officials entitled to such privileges.* Every one connected with the post or with the stamp office, every collector of every tax, every inspector of every manufacture, even the road-surveyors, if only they exercised their duties in the king's name, could advance the same claim; till the wonder came to be not that the taxes did not produce enough, but that, levied as they were, solely on the poorer classes, they produced anything at all worth collecting.

Calonne therefore saw plainly that the only remedy lay in the abolition of these exemptions; but it was not equally plain how he was to effect that abolition. It had been attempted by preceding ministers: it had

* De Tocqueville, "L'Ancien Régime et la Révolution," p. 137-9.

led to the downfall of preceding ministers: the firmness of Turgot, the address of Necker, had alike fallen before the enmity of the privileged classes; and he had no mind to share their fate. Yet, if he trusted to the usual form of proceeding, to an edict to be issued in the name of the king and to be registered by the Parliament, it seemed inevitable that he must fail as they had failed. It was certain that the Parliament would only register such an edict under compulsion, and almost certain that Louis would not have firmness sufficient to compel its obedience. He had already been engaged in one contest with the Parliaments, which had only submitted to register the edict for the last loan on being summoned to his presence and severely reproved for their contumacy; and Louis, who above all things coveted the character of Father of his people, was uneasy at having been driven to the slightest exertion of severity which, to his tender conscience, seemed incompatible with such a title. He was, therefore, well disposed to adopt any plan which might save him from the renewal of so unseemly a struggle. And Calonne, who piqued himself on his ingenuity, had devised one which, as it was different from any which had been adopted of late years, might, he flattered himself, produce different results.

From time to time the kings of the Valois race had sought to veil the despotic character of the authority which they really exercised, by convoking an assembly which they called the Notables, and which consisted of the most eminent of their subjects nominated by themselves, and by laying before them the measures which they intended to adopt. Cardinal Richelieu, at the beginning of his administration, had followed their example; and though that was the last instance

of such a council being assembled, yet the people had been constantly accustomed to it on a smaller scale, since a body bearing the same title, and composed of the principal citizens, existed in most towns of the kingdom for the management of their municipal affairs. Calonne proposed once more to revive them as a national council, with the object of obtaining their sanction to the measures which seemed necessary for the extrication of the nation from its present difficulties, and for its general future prosperity. The plan, like most others, had advantages to recommend it, and was open to objections. It seems clear that he embraced it from an honest desire to serve his king and country, that made him disregard the extent to which the enmities which it was likely to provoke might endanger his own power.* But unhappily the habits of carelessness to which he had so long given way could not be shaken off in a moment, and led him also to make light of the objections as affecting the king's government to which his proposal was open, and to neglect the obvious means by which alone they might have been counteracted. The advantages of the plan were, firstly, that it was in conformity with the ancient practices and institutions of the country; an important consideration at a time when speculative politicians of various schools were bewildering and seducing the public mind with untried and visionary schemes: and, secondly, that as according to invariable precedent it belonged to the king himself to nominate the members, he might, of course,

* In August, 1786, he wrote to a friend:—"Je viens de lire mon plan au roi. Il m'a bien entendu; bien écouté; m'a tout promis: mais je me fais pitié de moimême lorsque je pense du resultat qu'il peut avoir pour moi. N'importe. Je crois que c'est le bien: le bonheur du roi et du peuple. J'ai bon courage; je l'entreprendrai."—"Biogr. Univ." *v.* Calonne.

exclude all who were likely to be vehement or steadfast in opposition to the measures which the minister intended to lay before them; while, if their approval were secured, the rest of the nobles, of whom those summoned to this Assembly would in some degree seem to be the representatives, would find it difficult to refuse to adopt their views and to follow their example. The plan, therefore, was at once conciliatory and coercive, calculated, if skilfully carried out, to propitiate the nation at large, and at the same time to constrain that portion of it whose co-operation, while most indispensable, might be expected to be given with the greatest reluctance.

The disadvantages were, firstly, that it was very doubtful whether it would be found practicable to make such a selection of members of the intended Assembly that it could be safe to reckon on their acquiescence in the measures to be laid before them if they should be found, as they would be found, to affect the privileges and exemptions hitherto enjoyed by the nobles and clergy: and, secondly, that such a council could have no legislative authority; no power to enact, or repeal, or alter a single law or usage; and must consequently be entirely devoid of that feeling of responsibility which is the best security for wise counsels or prudent conduct proceeding from a numerous body. The members would be invited to discuss the whole condition of the State, past, present, and future; its pecuniary embarrassments; the evils which had led to them; the steps to be adopted to relieve or terminate them; and to put the whole administration and concerns of the kingdom for the future on a better footing. Yet they were to have no power of themselves to rectify nor to aid in rectifying a single abuse: they would not be able even to enforce the

adoption of such measures as the minister might propose and they might approve. Even while diminishing the credit of the Parliaments, the Notables would not abridge their admitted authority; for the royal edicts would still require Parliamentary registration. There was, therefore, great and obvious danger that an invitation to a body without legislative power, and consequently without responsibility, to discuss the state of the kingdom would be practically an invitation to it to exercise all its ingenuity in the discovery of grievances, and to publish them to the nation, though many might be imaginary and others not susceptible of instant remedy.

Besides the arguments drawn from the character of the assembly, and the course which he expected it to adopt, Calonne pressed others upon the Council of State, when he laid his plan before them, with great earnestness and considerable skill, but with little success. With the majority it weighed but little that he declared that the Count d'Artois approved of it; and still less that he affirmed that the Count de Provence had long since declared his adhesion to his general principles, for nearly every one knew that that Prince was his most decided enemy. Nor were his arguments more acceptable when he urged the necessity of sustaining the movement which the commercial treaty had commenced, since many of the councillors had been averse to such an union with the ancient enemy of the country, and there had as yet been no time for its beneficial results to dispel their prejudices. His most solid and statesmanlike reason was, perhaps, to be found in the necessity of finding some means of humbling the arrogance and overruling the obstinacy of the Parliament; his most seductive arguments those which represented the

convocation of the Notables as a return to the policy of the resolute and successful cardinal, and which contended that such a body must strengthen the hands of the existing Government, being as it were the flower of the nation added as temporary assessors to the Council of State. Yet he made no convert but Vergennes; nor was even his approval given without hesitation and reluctance. Still his sanction was sufficient to decide the king to ratify the consent which he had already privately expressed to Calonne: and in the last week of 1786 it was formally announced that the Notables were to be summoned in the ensuing spring, to deliberate on the means of extricating the kingdom from its embarrassments.

Louis, indeed, was more than willing; he was in the highest degree eager for the measure: so entirely had he been fascinated by Calonne's confident assurances that all would go well, that he wrote to a nobleman in his confidence, that he had been unable to sleep for joy at the decision that had been come to. But generally the announcement was received with unconcealed disapprobation. The nobles about the court, who, with all their faults, were unshaken in their loyalty, looking indeed on their own importance as inseparably bound up with the grandeur of the crown, saw in it a request of the countenance of subjects for measures which the king had a right to ordain by his own sole authority. And the Duke de Richelieu, now 90 years of age, remembering the majesty which Louis XIV. had preserved amid his heaviest disasters, asked indignantly what punishment that prince would have inflicted on a minister who had given him such advice. The Parliament were offended, because they saw in the measure only a blow aimed at their own pretensions. The people in

general were alarmed, fancying the new assembly was intended but as an engine for the imposition and exaction of heavier taxes than those which were already overwhelming them. While the inferior courtiers, parasites who were anxious for the maintenance of a minister whose facility they had found profitable, tried to alarm him for the consequences to himself, urging upon him that he was delivering himself over to his enemies, some of the bitterest of whom were men whom he would find it impossible to omit from the list of Notables.

This, however, was a danger which Calonne had weighed beforehand, and resolved to encounter. Yet, while steadily persevering in his design, with strange and inconsistent indifference he took no pains whatever to lessen the dangers, or to counteract any other of the evils predicted from the measure, though they were such as might have greatly weakened, if not wholly turned aside by judicious management; by a careful composition of the assembly, and a painstaking dexterity (which no man was more capable of exercising) in conciliating the leading members before the meeting.

The power of selecting the members, as has been already said, lay wholly with the king; and there were two strong reasons for including among them a considerable proportion of the Third Estate. The Notables of 1627 had, as we have seen, been composed in a great degree of a lower class than had been summoned in former reigns. And in the last two reigns the wealth and importance of the Third Estate had been continually increasing, while that of the nobles had been as steadily diminishing.* As a body, the

* "Depuis plusieurs siècles les nobles Français n'avaient cessé de s'appauvrir. 'Malgré ses priviléges la noblesse se ruine et s'anéantit tous les

class of bourgeois and roturiers was by this time far richer than that of the nobles. They had even in many instances acquired the same kind of property, landed estates: with their increased ease of circumstances had come increased refinement; they were now equally well-educated, equally accomplished: and there were thousands among them who differed only from the very highest of the classes above them in the want of a certain courtly polish and of a few invidious and unreasonable privileges. They had also greater weight among the population at large, from living among them in the rural districts and country towns. Of the nobles, with the exception of those belonging to one or two western provinces, all who could vie with them in wealth lived entirely in Paris, the perverse system established by Louis XIV. having made attendance at the court to be considered their principal duty: and the only men of gentle birth residing in the country were the clergy of each parish, with a few of the very poorest nobles. But the wealthy member of the Third Estate, having no admittance at court, made his home in the district which was the seat and source of his wealth, and necessarily enjoyed a great portion of the influence over the peasantry which the absenteeism of the better-born proprietor had left open to him.

The second reason, drawn from the measures to be submitted to the assembly, was stronger still. Though

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jours, et le tiers état s'empare des fortunes,' écrit tristement un gentilhomme en 1755 . . . Plusieurs provinces, comme celle du Limousin, dont parle Turgot, n'étaient remplies que par une petite noblesse pauvre qui ne possédait presque plus de terres, et ne vivait guère que de droits seigneuriaux et de rentes foncières. Dans cette généralité, dit un intendant dès le commencement du siècle, le nombre des familles nobles s'élève encore à plusieurs milliers; mais il n'y en a quinze qui aient vingt mille livres de rente."—De Tocqueville, "L'Ancien Régime," p. 118.

the thing most indispensable to the extrication of the kingdom from its financial embarrassments was the abrogation of the mischievous exemptions and other privileges of the two higher classes, it was obvious that a recommendation of such abrogation could not well be expected from an assembly composed solely of those classes. The history of the present reign, of the administrations of Turgot and Necker, was alone sufficient to prove this. For indeed the nobles clung to their exemptions, not solely on account of the pecuniary advantages they derived from them, though that is at all times an all-powerful motive; but also because they looked on them as a mark of distinction, as a token of their high birth, and an unmistakeable evidence of their superiority to the class which had no title to such exemptions. If, therefore, the abolition of these privileges was to be secured, (and without it there could be no amendment of the position of the kingdom, no reform could be more than an empty sound,) it was absolutely necessary that the assembly should contain a sufficient number of those eager for the abolition, to counterbalance the voices of those united for their maintenance, and, amid the clamour of conflicting interests, to secure an opportunity for the voice of reason and policy to make itself heard. But Calonne failed to see this, and out of the whole body of 144 members there were scarcely half-a-dozen of the Third Estate: not above 18 clergy, while, though the most obstinate sticklers for these exemptions, the most factious opponents of every ministry had always been found in the Parliaments, there were more than twice that number who, as presidents or attorney-generals, were connected with the parliaments of Paris or the provinces. He did not even take any care in his selection of the nobles and clergy to nominate those

who favoured his own views; and still less in the interval between the nomination and the meeting did he exert himself to soften the opposition of those whom he knew or might have known to be adverse to them. The assembly was divided into seven committees, presided over by six princes of the blood royal and the Duke de Penthièvre, who, as the son of the Count de Toulouse, was not without some claim to the same rank. And on the 22nd of February, 1787, they met at Versailles.

It was most unfortunate for Calonne that before the day of meeting he lost the support of Vergennes. He had died the preceding week, worn out, as was commonly believed, by anxiety of mind and the fatigues of office; and in him died the only statesman who had been able to inspire the king at once with regard and confidence. Louis felt his loss with acute sorrow; he paid a visit to his tomb, and with lamentation which betrayed his incapacity for government still more than his kindness of heart, expressed a wish that he himself were lying beside him in the grave. And in truth the greatness of his loss at the moment could hardly be overrated. For the deceased minister had also been greatly esteemed by his brother nobles for his patriotism and his soundness of judgment: and his advocacy of the abolition of privileges which he enjoyed in common with them could not have failed to have weight with many of them. He had, indeed, peculiar talents for influencing such an assembly. He was a fair and ready speaker, very clear in his arrangement of topics, lucid and intelligible in his arguments; and to these qualifications he added a conciliatory temper and consummate tact in the management of men, especially of antagonists. He was also acceptable to the nation in general; popular even with that portion of the manufacturing interest

who disliked the late treaty with England, but who did not allow their discontent with that to outweigh the greater benefits that all trade had derived from the Peace of 1783, of which he had been the negotiator. Though Calonne had disdained or neglected to secure a previous assent to his proposals by the management of individual members, he displayed his usual ingenuity in his arrangement of the different committees or chambers; for, as each was to give but one vote according to the sentiments of its majority, and, as he knew pretty well who were generally friendly to him, and who were most likely to be adverse, he so parcelled out the members that, though through his original carelessness in the selection the greater number of individuals was against him, the majority of the chambers at first voted for his measures. But this was the only address that he displayed, the only trouble that he gave himself on the subject; and, when he had laid his ideas before them, the members generally felt inclined not only to resist measures which were injurious to them, but to resent the intention that seemed to exist to take them by surprise.

Louis opened the sittings in a speech of singular brevity, which yet gave a sufficient outline of the general objects of the Government. He desired and hoped to relieve the distress of the poorest class of his subjects; to improve the revenue of the State by a more equal distribution of the taxation, and to develop the resources of the country, by encouraging agricultural and manufacturing industry, and by removing the shackles which had hitherto fettered the free action and impeded the progress of trade and commerce. And, while inviting the opinions of his hearers on the measures by which he hoped to attain

these objects, he expressed a confidence that no one would allow private interests to stand in the way of the general welfare. Calonne's own speech, which went into the details of the financial policy which he contemplated, delighted both his friends and his enemies. His friends, by the clearness of his statements, the extent and ingenuity of his plans, and the confidence which it expressed in their success, in the solid resources and future well-doing of the nation; his enemies, by the inconsiderate way in which he reinforced their ranks through his abuse of all his predecessors, and by the handle which he gave them for questioning the candour of the most important of his financial assertions, inasmuch as he wholly omitted the last two years from his calculations. Yet on the first point he was blameless. He had to acknowledge a large deficiency; in fact, its existence was the very foundation of his case; and it was equally important for him to show that he was not responsible for it, but that it had existed long before his installation in office, and had not been removed by his immediate predecessors. Considering the general popularity of Necker, it may have been imprudent to attack his administration; but, apart from the impolicy of that minister's financial statement, there could be no possible question that it was a fallacious one. And when Calonne showed that Necker had borrowed nearly five hundred millions of livres, it was plain that no savings and no augmentation of the revenue which he had effected in the same time could possibly have counterbalanced the interest on such enormous loans. In fact the real annual deficiency fell but little, if at all, short of a hundred millions in 1784, and it had not diminished since that time. Yet Calonne saw no reason to distrust the future if his plans were adopted; and, as

had been already intimated in the speech of the king, they were of two kinds: the expenditure was to be diminished by a careful extinction of abuses, and the revenue was to be increased by an equalization of the taxation. This was the principle which all recent finance ministers had sought to establish; and to which they had successively fallen victims. But Calonne accompanied it with concessions which he expected to render it more palatable. He proposed to subject all classes throughout the entire kingdom to a tax on the land, or on the produce of the land, which should be payable in kind, and, as a compensation, to remove the tailles, and one or two other unpopular taxes and restrictions on commerce, and to modify the gabelle. He also, though that was not a financial measure, announced the intention to establish provincial assemblies, promising the kingdom great benefit from the stimulus which such bodies would give to the execution of useful public works in the different districts.

The last proposal was the only part of his scheme that found the least favour with the assembly, which showed their approval of it by the promptitude with which they discussed the details of the organization of the intended assemblies. The equalization of taxation they opposed with still greater eagerness and unanimity. They objected to the payment in kind. When he showed a disposition not to insist on that which was a mere question of detail, they evinced an equal objection to paying it in money. It was plain that they would not voluntarily surrender their privileges of exemption in any manner; and, for want of any other argument, they attacked the minister for his silence respecting the accounts during the last two years. It could not have been expected that they would show any abatement of the necessity for the proposed

measures: but the demand for them, as calculated to afford the information from which alone they could form an opinion of the measures on which their judgment was invited, was reasonable; and it argued great inconsiderateness in Calonne to have given his adversaries an opportunity of making it, instead of anticipating them by their voluntary production.

They did make it vociferously; and, emboldened by having one legitimate ground of complaint, the Archbishop of Narbonne proceeded to assert that even if they were produced, such an assembly as theirs could have no power to vote such a land tax as they were now asked to approve: that authority was only, he said, vested in the States-General. There was no question but that such an assertion was correct in principle, and that by the theory of the constitution the States-General had the sole power to grant the king money. The length of time, however, which had elapsed since their last convocation had caused their prerogatives to be very generally forgotten; and for the moment the archbishop's hint passed apparently unheeded, and the assembly passed on to mere personal disputes.

Necker, though he had not been included among the members, demanded permission to appear before them that he might justify the accuracy of his statement which Calonne had so seriously impeached; and, when the king rejected the demand, which indeed he could hardly have granted without admitting that the selection of the members had been originally injudicious, he drew up a counter-statement, which he circulated among the assembly, and had no difficulty in finding friends among the members to defend it and him. Presently Calonne himself published a pamphlet in support of his system as a whole, appeal-

ing by such a publication to public opinion, the power of which he was beginning to appreciate. But in spite of all his efforts, which were great, and his arguments in favour of his schemes, which were for the most part sound, the opposition to them among the Notables increased daily. In some points it was avowed that the objections on which his adversaries relied referred rather to himself than to his policy. They were unwilling to trust him to carry out measures which in other hands they would not have disapproved. And certainly there was some reason to doubt whether the economy which was an indispensable part of his and indeed of every scheme by which the finances could be replaced on a healthy footing, was likely to be efficiently introduced by a minister whose career had hitherto been marked by a prodigality without example. Some, indeed, of his measures no one ventured to resist: the abolition of the corvées, and the re-establishment of free trade in corn, were universally approved. But, when a few days afterwards he introduced a proposal for the improved management of the royal domains, though it was both honest and judicious, the whole assembly showed that it had made up its mind beforehand to reject it, and fresh attacks poured in upon him from all sides. The opposition reckoned, probably, on the Count of Provence, whose personal dislike of Calonne was no secret, being disinclined, as first prince of the blood, to permit any interference with the crown lands. And these expectations were fulfilled; though that prince did not choose to make that the avowed pretext for his opposition. He rather selected the modification of the gabelle; which he attacked in an elaborate paper that he read to his chamber, as not going far enough: a criticism which was manifestly puerile in its argu-

ments, but important from the position of the critic, as supplying the opposition with a leader in the first subject in the kingdom.

They soon obtained a second, of still greater importance. Those members who belonged to the different Parliaments were enemies to the minister from the first moment of his proposing the convocation of the Notables, and had not been appeared by his including them in the number; and the keeper of the seals, M. de Miromesnil, as their mouthpiece, was incessantly endeavouring to obtain the king's ear; though in this, as will be seen, he miscalculated his strength, and brought on his own dismissal from office. But the clergy, who had been equally set against him by his proposal to subject them to his land-tax, directed their efforts to gain over, not Louis but Marie Antoinette, and had an instrument on whose influence with her they could more safely rely in the Abbé Vermond. When the queen was still a young girl at Schönbrunn, Maria Teresa, anxious for her education in the French language, and perhaps already planning that marriage for her which had so miserable an end, applied to Choiseul for a tutor for the princess; and he, by the advice of Loménie de Brienne, Archbishop of Toulouse, recommended Vermond, who at that time was the librarian of one of the chief colleges in Paris. He was not ill-suited to such an office, being a man of fair information on most subjects, of courtly manners, and, if not a very zealous servant of his Church, free from the vices which rendered too many of his clerical brethren in the capital conspicuous. The archbishop was ambitious of succeeding to Calonne's place; and, as the author of Vermond's promotion, looked on himself as entitled to claim a return of his good offices.*

* There can hardly be a greater proof of the heedless way in which

Nor was the abbé disposed to evade the obligation. He had naturally considerable influence with the queen, whom he had accompanied from Vienna as her secretary, and now undertook to persuade her that even what was good in Calonne's plans would be far better executed by the archbishop, whose appointment would conciliate the clergy, for whose adhesion the king was particularly anxious. Marie Antoinette was herself offended with Calonne, because he had not originally consulted her on his project of convoking the Notables, and with this feeling listened willingly to the suggestions of her secretary. And, as every discussion unsettled the king's mind, she made little doubt that he would be willing to get rid of a minister whose projects caused him such embarrassment. In his own deliberate opinion, Louis approved of every part of Calonne's plans, and was indignant at the opposition which they met with from the Notables. But when the minister endeavoured to persuade him to express his sentiments publicly and formally to the assembly, he could not prevail upon him to make the exertion.

The knowledge of his refusal naturally strengthened the opposition; and on the 13th of March, less than three weeks from the first meeting, the seven Chambers entered an unanimous protest against the land tax, and against the language of a speech which Calonne had delivered the day before. With incredible weakness Louis allowed this protest to be published, and even thanked some of the leaders of the opposition for their zeal in informing him of the

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Calonne miscalculated his resources and disregarded all obstacles, than the fact that among his probabilities of success he originally reckoned the firm adherence of Brienne, though the archbishop was in truth not only his enemy but his rival.

truth. They now more openly than ever urged upon him the dismissal of Calonne, arguing that that was the course adopted by the king of England when his Parliament withdrew its support from his existing minister. It was a bad argument to adduce to Louis, who was as prejudiced as ever against English principles; and perhaps it obtained for the falling statesman the short respite which he enjoyed. More than once in the next three weeks, as he laid fresh documents before the king, evidences of the diligence which he was at last applying seriously to the affairs of the State, and of his unabated fertility of invention, Louis renewed his assurances of approbation: and Calonne had reason to think that he had at last won him to a firm support of his measures and of himself, when, on the 8th of April, he prevailed on him to dismiss his enemy and the champion of the Parliament, Miromesnil, from his office. He was elated too soon; and, with his usual over-confidence, sought to push the advantage which he had gained too far. He had learnt to doubt the friendship of the Baron de Breteuil, the minister of the household, and demanded that he too should be dismissed. Louis would probably have consented to this step likewise; but before the matter was settled, it came to the knowledge of the queen, who turned her wavering husband the other way; and on the 9th, to his great astonishment, Calonne, instead of getting rid of De Breteuil, received a notification that the king demanded his own resignation.

If he was disappointed, those who had procured his downfall at first appeared equally so. It seemed as if Louis did not know whom to name as his successor; and even after his dismissal he continued for some days to transact business at his office, till many

believed either that he was about to be restored, or that his resignation had been but a feint to disarm or delude his enemies.* They renewed their efforts against him with increased earnestness, till they procured proofs of greater or less validity of his having engaged in some illicit operations on the Exchange, by which they induced Louis to banish him; and he retired to England, where he published an elaborate defence of his whole conduct, which in many respects was convincing as to the policy, indeed the necessity, of the measures which he had recommended, and in almost every point as to the unfairness of the opposition by which he had been defeated. But even his complete removal did not lead to the promotion of the archbishop. He was notorious not only for the most open profligacy, but for avowed infidelity. Louis had already on that ground refused to transfer him to the archbishopric of Paris;† and rightly judged that to elevate him to the chief ministerial office in the kingdom would be an almost equal scandal. He had replaced Vergennes by the Count de Montmorin, and Miromesnil by M. de Lamoignon, one of the Presidents of the Parisian Parliament; and these new ministers were urgent with him to reappoint Necker: a step for which the great majority of the nation was equally anxious.

They might have succeeded had not Necker's own obstinacy and vanity interfered. He had presented to the king the reply which he had drawn up to Calonne's disparagement of his financial statement; and Louis appeared satisfied with its arguments, but

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* Mémoires de Bésenval, iii. 213-6.

† "Il faut," dit il, avec un mouvement d'impatience qui lui fait honneur, "que, du moins, l'archevêque de Paris croie en Dieu."—"Souvenirs," par le Duc de Lévis, p. 102.

forbade him to print it. Necker disobeyed the injunction,* and Louis indignantly banished him from Paris, and bestowed the controller's office on a M. Fourqueux, a Councillor of State and one of the Assembly of Notables, but a man of no reputation or ability. It was seen almost instantly that he was wholly incompetent either to take up Calonne's plans or to form others; and the friends of Necker and the archbishop renewed their efforts in their favour. Louis had almost decided for Necker when the queen interfered, and frightened him from his purpose by urging the inconsistency of recalling a contumacious servant from exile to entrust him with the government of the kingdom. He submitted to her arguments or to her earnestness; and having yielded so far, yielded further still, and against both his judgment and his conscience gave the archbishop the appointment she entreated for him.

Never did she exert her influence with such fatal effect. De Brienne was so generally known to be a thoroughly bad man that it was not suspected that he was also thoroughly incapable. He had a certain gravity of demeanour when conversing on business which had imposed on many, and he had also the address to lead the conversation to points which his hearers understood less than himself;† dilating on finance and the money-market even to the ladies of the court, who had had some share in persuading the queen of his fitness for office. But the moment that he was installed in a post which required real knowledge and decision, it was seen that he possessed but a mere smattering of information on any subject,

* Madame de Staël: "Considérations sur la Rév. Fr.," i. 114-5.

† "Son grand art consistait à parler à chacun des choses qu'il croyait qu'on ignorait."—De Lévis, 100.

and that he had no settled views of either financial or general policy.* In one respect, he took office under favorable circumstances, since the Notables were in general so pleased at having got rid of Calonne that they were disposed to approve of any successor to him. They passed resolutions recommending reductions in the establishments of the king and his brothers, and as such arrangements coincided with the archbishop's own notions,† great reductions were accordingly made; costly ceremonies were abolished, old servants were dismissed, of those who were retained the appointments were greatly reduced in value; and the Notables, conciliated by these compliances, agreed with some slight modifications to several of the measures which when proposed by Calonne they had rejected. For a few weeks all was peace and unanimity; and at the end of May, when they had sat three months, the new minister ventured to dispense with the Notables, as if matters were now sufficiently settled to enable him to go on with the old forms. Lamoignon, as keeper of the seals, dismissed them with a complimentary speech, in which, from what had been done during their sitting, though he mentioned little but the abolition of the corvée and the modification of the gabelle, he predicted the immediate advent of universal prosperity. All evils were to be removed without confusion, and without injury to any one; public credit was to become better established than ever. They had the solemn promise of the king

* Madame de Staël calls him "ni assez éclairé pour être philosophe, ni assez ferme pour être despote. Il admirait tour à tour la conduite du Cardinal Richelieu et les principes des Économistes."—"Fr. Rev.," 122. She is not always quite a fair judge of her father's contemporaries and rivals; but the whole of De Brienne's official career bears out this portrait.

† "Il aimait les petites économies."—De Lévis, 109.

himself that disorder should never again appear in the finances; under the new provincial assemblies the whole kingdom would be regenerated, and the administration of the State would daily more and more resemble the paternal government of a private family.* Amid such a flood of promised blessings it was hardly noticed that the speaker announced also the intention to impose some new taxes. The departing members were too good-humoured and sanguine to be critical. Calonne in his opening speech had declared that for the old maxim of the monarchy, "Whatever the king wills, the law wills," the present monarch had substituted, "Whatever the happiness of the people requires, the king wills."† And accepting this promise as now realized, the President Nicolai, as he rose from his seat to quit the chamber, thanked God "for having caused him to be born in such an age, under such a Government, and for having made him the subject of a king whom he was constrained to love;" and the thanksgiving was re-echoed by the whole assembly.

But the moment that the Notables were dissolved De Brienne's difficulties began. Whether Calonne was justified or not in affirming that Necker had left as large a deficit as other ministers, it was certain that there was a deficit now of enormous amount, and so difficult to ascertain with precision that those who investigated the matter most carefully, differed by a hundred millions in their estimate of it. Brienne announced that his first step must be to borrow eighty millions; and the avowal, now that the screen which

* See almost the whole speech, Lacretelle, v. 168–171.

† "Que d'autres rappellent cette maxime de notre monarchie: 'Si veut le roi, si veut la loi.' La maxime de sa majesté est: 'Si veut le bonheur du peuple, si veut le roi.'"—Ib., 158.

the Notables had interposed between the Government and the Parliament was removed, re-awakened the insubordinate and factious spirit of the latter. It was encouraged by the mismanagement of the archbishop himself, who showed his fear of that body in the very act of inviting its assent. Lamoignon, who knew its temper, recommended him to carry everything with a high hand, and to command their simultaneous registration of all the edicts which had been approved by the Notables, and of any others which he had since seen to be requisite, in a mass; but he preferred dealing them out to them by instalments, as if when the first was brought before them, it was any secret what the last was intended to be. The consequence of such a mode of proceeding, the motive of which was apparent through the veil of moderation under which it was attempted to disguise it, was natural enough. The Parliament was emboldened to revive all its old pretensions, and after registering the edicts which abolished the corvée, those which sanctioned free trade in corn, and that for the establishment of provincial assemblies, they positively refused registration to one for granting duties on stamps; a refusal to register that for the land-tax would have been tantamount to a declaration in favour of the exemptions of the privileged classes, which were now condemned by the indignation of the whole kingdom, so that they could not venture absolutely to reject it; but they sought to delay and hinder even that by demanding first to see the state of the accounts, that they might judge how far such a measure was indispensable. The debates grew warm, and, coupled with the importance of the subject, excited such interest out of doors among the citizens in general that the palace of the Parliament was thronged with spectators,

who, with a violation of decency which either no one had authority to restrain, or which the president secretly favoured, expressed their approval or disapproval of the different speakers; hooting those who supported the minister,* cheering and throwing garlands to those who declared against him. Neither speakers nor spectators were all acting on their own impulses. The Duke de Chartres had lately succeeded to the title and vast wealth of his father, the Duke d'Orleans, and was already devoting no small portion of it to bribing a party to oppose the court in everything. The queen he hated with a personal animosity which had in it something of revenge: he had dared to approach her with solicitations of gallantry, and had been repulsed with virtuous disdain. The king he himself despised for his moderation and absence of ambition as much as for his want of talent and firmness; and thinking that it would not be difficult to make him abdicate the throne or to procure his deposition, he sought to pave the way for his own accession, tracing out for himself the path which forty years afterwards his son followed but too successfully.

While the discussion was at its height, a clerical councillor, the Abbé Sabatier,† closely connected with the Orleans party, added fuel to the fire by an exclamation which dressed up in a lighter form a topic already, as we have seen, urged by the Archbishop of Narbonne on the Notables. "What we want," said he, "is not the state of the accounts, but the States-General." And it is singularly characteristic of the nation that the idea thus presented under the disguise

* Mémoires de Bésenval, iii. 260.

† He is named by Madame de Staël, i. 123. Lacretelle does not name him, but merely calls him "un conseiller qu'on savait être lié avec le Duc d'Orléans."

of a pun took greater hold of those who heard it than when gravely put forth as a constitutional argument. The expression was at once taken up by graver orators, who insisted upon the propriety of convoking that long disused body; and as others denied it, arguing from former precedents that such an assembly, since it had no legislative authority, was powerless to do any good,* and was likely to be the parent of confusion and mischief, a fresh subject of debate was thus afforded to all who wished to embarrass the Government. The archbishop at first took little heed of the new agitation. He had occupation enough in securing the registration of the edicts objected to, and the old contests between the king and the Parliament were reproduced in all their violence. The first object of attack was the stamp duty, which, as we have seen, the Parliament had already once refused to register, and which the opponents of the Government were the more disposed to assail from the resemblance which it bore to the measure that had first kindled the revolt in America. And a deputation from the Parliament presented the king a formal remonstrance against it, coupled with a denunciation of the ministers for preventing the truth from reaching his ears, and with a formal demand for the convocation of the States-General. As no notice whatever was taken of this new act of opposition, the party of the remonstrants

* Sir James Stephen, in his "Lecture on the States-General of the Fourteenth Century" (vol. i. Lecture 10; compare also that on the Power of the Purse in France, vol. ii. Lecture 14, esp. pp. 40, 72,) shows that the States-General not only had no power of legislation, but that they had always been content not to have it, never using even their admitted right of granting money to the king as a weapon of constitutional liberty. Their power, if it can be called by such a name at all, was limited to representing to the sovereign the public grievances against which they were instructed by the *cahiers* of their constituents to remonstrate. "When they had all been delivered to him, the States were both of right and in fact dissolved."

proceeded to attack the other measures of the Government too. D'Epresménil, who, as we have seen, had already made himself prominent by his resistance to some of the loans required by Necker during his administration, now with vehement eloquence led the opposition to the registration both of the edict for the land-tax and of that for the proposed loan. He proposed a resolution that the Parliament had not the right to register edicts for raising money; and the whole body of councillors were too completely blinded either by their passions or by the money of D'Orleans to see the inconsistency of such a vote with their long-continued efforts to establish that very right which he now disowned. They passed the resolution, but it brought on them only the greater discomfiture. Matters had come to that point, the crown had been gradually brought into such a situation that there was no alternative left to it but either that of supporting its authority by extreme severity, or yielding up for ever the power of raising money, which in fact was the power of governing, without the consent of the Parliament. The populace were even losing their ancient reverence for the royal family, and the Count d'Artois was insulted in the streets because he avowed his disapproval of the opposition. And these considerations were forcibly pressed on the king, who, with all his desire to conciliate and humour his subjects to the utmost, was not yet prepared to abandon all the prerogatives which had descended to him from his ancestors. He held a Bed of Justice, and compelled the registration. And when, as it had done before, the Parliament proceeded to comfort itself by subsequent remonstrance, and, on that being disregarded, by a formal protest against all that had been done, and declared the registration invalid, as having been extorted

from it by compulsion,* he banished it to Troyes, sending a detachment of the guard by night to the house of each individual member, to command him at once to depart for that city, without holding communication with any one.

The times and temper of the people had so changed of late, that a measure which had been regarded with absolute indifference ten years before, now inflamed the whole population of the city, and even alarmed some of the ministers. The people chaired D'Epresménil through the streets; and when the archbishop took advantage of the storm he had provoked to induce the king to make him prime minister, the Marshal Ségur, minister at war, and the Marquis de Castries, of the marine, thinking themselves lowered by the formal appointment of a chief, resigned their offices. He passed at once from the extremity of confidence to the extremity of alarm; and, finding that he could not trust his colleagues, he showed all the world that he could not trust himself. He began to treat with the Parliament with which he had quarrelled the month before. He allowed the banished councillors to send a deputation to Versailles, which the king received, and to whom, though their language was more peremptory than courtly, he abandoned the taxes to which they objected; he permitted the whole body to return to Paris, and on the 19th of September laid before it a fresh edict for the reimposition of the old property-tax of five per cent. The Parliament, as if equally with the minister bent on showing itself inconsistent and contemptible, forgot that only a few weeks before it had pronounced itself legally incompetent to register a money bill, and registered this with-

* "Mémoires de Bésenval," iii. 258.

out a single word of objection. But the peace thus made between it and the minister lasted only a few days. He had learnt that he had greatly underrated his necessities, and in the course of October brought down a fresh edict for a loan of 440 millions. Such a demand was a signal for a renewal of hostilities with greater violence than ever. The Parliament not only refused to register the edict, but again presented a formal petition to the king to convene the States-General as the only body known to the constitution of sufficient authority to heal the wounds of the State. Louis replied with apparent severity, through which, as usual, his weakness was too clearly seen. He summoned the Parliament to a Royal Sitting, which precedent had established as a mark of higher displeasure than a Bed of Justice; but the language in which he refused their petition was so singularly ill chosen as to convey an impression that under other circumstances he would grant it. He alleged as the reason for his refusal that the demand had been indiscreetly preferred; and the speech of the keeper of the seals, Lamoignon, was if possible worse; since he plainly promised in the king's name that when the debts of the treasury were discharged he would willingly communicate to the nation the measures which he had taken for the general welfare. It was not likely that the Parliamentary leaders should be cowed by such hesitating reproof. Their language became more violent than ever; D'Epresménil even presumed to attack the propriety of summoning the members to either Royal Sitting or Bed of Justice; declaring both to be alike instruments of despotism, the difference between them being simply that the latter was stamped with the duplicity, the other with the audacity, of tyranny; and D'Orleans at last threw off the mask, and avowed

his opposition to the Government, protesting that the compulsory registration of any edict was intrinsically illegal.

In spite, however, of his protest, and of D'Epresménil's vehement oratory, the presence of the king prevailed with the majority of the councillors; they voted the registration of the edicts, and the king attended by the princes and the ministers quitted the assembly; omitting by a strange oversight first to declare it dissolved, a blunder which had most mischievous consequences. The members continued sitting, and were presently rejoined by D'Orleans, who, as a member of the royal family, had withdrawn with the king; but who quickly returned to encourage his partisans, and to receive their panegyrics for having thus openly put himself forward as the opponent of the court. By flattery of the duke they presently inflamed themselves to such a defiance of the Government that they even assumed a right to undo what they themselves had just done with all due formality. Though the votes had been regularly collected by the keeper of the seals without any one making the slightest objection to his proceedings, they now declared that the proper formalities had not been observed, and that in consequence their vote just passed was a nullity, and that any contraction of a loan by virtue of it would be illegal. It might have been thought that conduct of such factious contumacy, alike contrary to law and precedent, and adopted on grounds that were manifestly and notoriously false, would have roused both king and minister to encounter or chastise it with steady energy. But it seemed as if nothing could give them such courage. Sabatier and another of the councillors, named Fréteau, were arrested, and D'Orleans was banished from Paris. But, as no blow

was struck at the whole body, the Parliament protested against this chastisement of individual members in higher language than they had before ventured on. They did not, they said, ask for clemency, but for justice; and claimed the liberation or immediate trial of the prisoners as an actual right. As no reply was given to this demand, which indeed embodied principles that had certainly not been asserted for centuries, they directed their opposition back to its more usual channel, and repeated their protest against loans. The king sent for them to Versailles, and tore the offensive leaf from its registers. Rising in its audacity, the Parliament then refused to register an edict which had no connexion with taxation, but only removed a few of the worst disabilities to which the Protestants were subjected; being especially influenced in this disobedience by D'Epresménil, who to his political enthusiasm added a religious fanaticism which approached insanity. He had founded a sect of Illuminati, who believed themselves favoured with supernatural visions; and he declared that he himself had been visited by the Virgin, who with her own lips had enjoined him to resist the indulgence intended for heretics.

Yet, in spite of this continuance of the opposition, after a little time Sabatier and Fréteau were released on condition of not returning to Paris; while D'Orleans was pardoned, and at the beginning of 1788 was received by Louis at Versailles. De Brienne had formed another plan for defeating his enemies. He saw that while the Parliament continued to preserve its existing form the strife would be perpetual and the victory practically with it; for every measure of severity cost Louis so much uneasiness, as being, to his tender conscience, a departure from the character of father of his people

which he desired to maintain, that the archbishop saw that he must for the future proceed by less direct methods. If the king could not be persuaded so far to undo his earlier acts as to abolish the Parliament altogether, he might be induced to supersede it in its political functions by the erection of a more dignified court to discharge them: and De Brienne therefore proposed to diminish the members of the Parliament by the suppression of several of its chambers, and to erect six chambers, to be called Grand Bailliages, as courts of appeal, and one Plenary Court to act as a great council for legislative purposes.

Such a plan could not be matured in a moment, and meanwhile his adversaries were indefatigable. Undeterred by the fate of Sabatier, a young councillor named Monsabert proposed a resolution, intended to be entirely fatal to the land-tax, that, since there were no representatives of the people to vote subsidies, the proprietor of each estate was the sole judge of the contribution which it ought to pay; and D'Epresménil having by some means or other, probably by bribing the printers, procured accurate copies of the edicts in contemplation with respect to the new courts, laid them before a meeting of the whole Parliament; and with eloquence of a higher tone than he had previously risen to, and with a correct appreciation of the principles of real liberty which we shall look for in vain in any previous development of a single statesman of either party, denounced every part of the minister's scheme. We may pass over the speaker's assumption of the right of the Parliament to exercise legislative powers; his denunciation of the proposed Plenary Court; his assertion that this new assembly, "a phantom," as he termed it, "and a derisive representation of the assemblies in which the ancient kings

of France had been accustomed to confer with their great vassals," was only designed to furnish the king with an excuse for breaking his promise to convoke the States-General (a promise which he had certainly never as yet given); and his implied comparison of the gentle Louis with the furious Philip of Spain. It is rather to the resolutions to which he led the Parliament to agree almost unanimously that we must turn if we would see how fairly he laid down the conditions indispensable to political freedom, and if we would also form an adequate idea of the guilt of those men who, with the same language on their lips, so wholly departed from his doctrines in their conduct. On the 4th of May, 1788, the Parliament of Paris resolved that France was a monarchy in which the king governed by fixed and acknowledged laws; the most important and fundamental of which

Assured the crown to the Bourbon family, and its heirs male for ever:

Conferred on the States-General alone, lawfully elected, the sole right of levying taxes:

Secured the irremoveability of magistrates, except for misconduct. And

Asserted the inviolable right of every citizen to his personal liberty and lawful property.*

The orator who led the Parliament to this vote had clearly studied the history of this country, and especially that of the British Parliament in its struggles with the crown in the preceding century, with diligence and judgment. It was not, indeed, true that either of the last two articles had formed any part of

* I have given these from Lacretelle. Amedée Renée states them somewhat differently, but the only discrepancy of importance is that he makes the last resolution a more precise assertion of the doctrine established by our Habeas Corpus Act.

the ancient constitution of France; we have even seen that the last was thought by many inconsistent with the privileges and proper rights of the sovereign.* But it was undeniable that, if the freedom of a nation was built up of the freedom of each individual citizen, they were indispensable: and the less generally their necessity was acknowledged, the greater is the credit due to him who laid them down so clearly and asserted them so resolutely. Louis, on the contrary, or rather the archbishop, for to his advisers and not to the gentle king himself must every measure of violence or even of vigour be ascribed, would seem to have studied only the acts of tyranny or rashness by which the Stuart sovereigns alienated their long-patient subjects. As Charles had endeavoured to awe his Parliament into submission by the arrest of Hampden and his followers, so now Louis was persuaded to send his officers down to the palace of the Parliament to seize Montsabert and D'Epresménil. The news of what was about to happen had spread among the citizens; for an attempt had previously been made to arrest them at their own houses, but they had been warned in time to withdraw; and with the whole body of magistrates were seated in their chamber when the Marquis d'Agoust, the captain of the guard, entered, and declaring his commission and also his ignorance of the persons of the obnoxious members, courteously invited them to surrender themselves in obedience to the king's order. The agitation and uproar were great. Not only did policy combine with party-spirit to prompt the members to make common cause with their colleagues who were thus menaced, but a vast multitude, who

* See note from Dr. Moore, quoted supra, vol. iii. p. 427.

thronged all the avenues to the palace, and even pressed in at the open doors, many having arms in their hands, shouted imperiously to them that they must not allow D'Epresménil to be taken from them. In reply to the captain's inquiry they rose in a body: "We are all D'Epresménils and Montsaberts!" and showed a resolve that all would go to prison, or all remain at liberty. But the officer, as every officer of the guards had been to that day, was as firm as he was courteous: he repeated his summons, advancing into the chamber at the head of his men: and D'Epresménil, that nothing might be wanting to the propriety and dignity of his conduct, fearing that a tumult might arise whose issue could hardly be foreseen, avowed himself to be one of those of whom he was in search. Montsabert followed his example; and the two retired peacefully in D'Agoust's custody. The Parliament, deprived of its leaders, obeyed a command which was sent down to adjourn and attend the king on the morrow at Versailles, where another Bed of Justice was held. The edicts which they had opposed, with several others, one of which deprived the Parliament for the future of the right of registering the laws, and another formally established the Plenary Court, were registered without further resistance.

But the archbishop had not yet gained the victory. D'Epresménil had hardly been more urgent with his party to insist on the rights which concerned the freedom of the nation, than to refuse all such concurrence with the plans of the minister as would be implied by their becoming members of his Grand Bailliages, or his Plenary Court, and a combination had accordingly been formed to refuse any such nomination. The Plenary Court was intended to be composed of the king himself, the princes of the

blood, the great officers of the crown, the peers, a selection from the marshals of the army, and prelates of the church, with the addition of several of the chief councillors of the Parliament, and the presidents of the different chambers. But the greater part of the proposed members refused seats in it: opinions were marching so rapidly that even those selected began to question the power of the sovereign to make such an alteration of the constitution by his own mere will; and it was found impossible to assemble the court for a single meeting. Encouraged by this failure of the court, the Parliament ventured on a step wholly unprecedented, not only presenting a fresh protest to the king, but printing and circulating it: nor was the opposition confined to them; but several of the peers drew up and presented to the king a letter in which they spoke of his substitution of the new Courts and Bailliages for the Parliament as subversive of the fundamental principles of the government. Of the letter Louis took no notice, but towards the Parliament he was persuaded to show his displeasure in a violent and somewhat undignified manner. While the councillors were deliberating at Versailles, the Governor of Paris entered their chambers, and having seized all their registers and documents of every kind locked the doors, and closed them with the king's seal; while a royal edict suspended all the provincial Parliaments.

Meanwhile these transactions were causing a greater excitement in the provinces than in Paris itself. In the metropolis the Parliament after a single meeting, in which they passed violent but ineffectual resolutions against the archbishop and Lamoignon, obeyed the royal command and dispersed; but the provinces, where distance diminished the authority of the crown, showed a very different spirit. Some of them had

exhibited an insubordinate spirit from the first moment of Brienne's appointment; and now that the measures taken seemed to betoken a resolution for the future to dispense with the Parliaments altogether, they broke out in tumults of unprecedented lawlessness. The greatest violence was in the south; and from west to east the whole of that district rose in insurrection. Some of the provincial Parliaments, which, in spite of the king's order, continued to meet, went so far as to declare all who should obey the Government traitors. In Béarn, the nursery of the Bourbon family, the malcontents were even understood to entertain a design of declaring themselves independent; and when the Duke de Guiche, who enjoyed a deserved popularity in the province, was sent to pacify them, they sallied out from Pau to meet him, bearing with them the cradle of Henry IV., and on that sacred relic swore never to surrender the ancient privileges of their nation. In Grenoble the contagion spread more generally. The whole populace rose in riot, sounded the tocsin, fired on the king's troops, and on the grave of their national hero, Bayard, took an oath conceived in the same spirit with that of the Béarnais. It was to no purpose that the nobles of the province tried to mitigate the fury of the movement by putting themselves at its head; Pompignan, Archbishop of Vienne, a prelate of antique virtue and universally beloved, consenting himself to administer the oath which all insisted on taking. Mounier, the attorney-general of the province, who as a lawyer preferred the interest of the Parliament to every other consideration, and who from his practised eloquence and energy had greater influence than any other individual, counteracted all the efforts of the nobles, and instigated the people of the whole province, and especially

the citizens of the chief towns, to refuse all accommodation with the Government which was not founded on the restoration of the Parliaments and the convocation of the States-General.

In the opposite corner of the kingdom, in Brittany, the opposition was still more formidable; for there the nobles headed it, not to soften the people, but to inflame them. Being almost the latest of the great provinces to be united to the crown, its inhabitants had preserved a more than ordinary feeling of independence and attachment to their ancient franchises; and now, in spite of an express prohibition, they held a meeting of the states of the province, which sent a deputation of twelve of the principal gentlemen to remonstrate with the king on his minister's proceedings. The deputation was openly and warmly countenanced in Paris by the resident nobles who were connected with the province; and among them by La Fayette, though he held a military command, which, on principles of military subordination might have been expected to render him more scrupulous in encouraging disobedience to the crown. But he had already been one of the loudest in the demand for the States-General, and his vanity at having, as he fancied, contributed to the deliverance of the United States from the domination of the English king, had shaken his notions of loyalty to any sovereign, even to his own. That so bold an act as that of an assembly which had been prohibited from meeting at all, presuming to address the king, both in defiance and in reproof of his edicts, roused the indignation of Louis himself, and the archbishop had for once no difficulty in persuading him to treat its remonstrances as Louis XIV. would have treated them. He committed the whole company of deputies to the Bastille, and de-

prived of their employments every one of the nobles who had given them encouragement in Paris. A Breton regiment, which had shown signs of sympathy with them, was disbanded, and the Marshal de Stainville was sent down to Brittany with 10,000 men who could be relied on to prevent or quell any attempt at insurrection.

For a few weeks Brittany was quieted if not contented. The archbishop grew more confident than ever, speaking even of civil war as a contingency for which he was provided, and which he would soon be able to extinguish. But in spite of his boasting the dissatisfaction grew daily more and more general. Presently the clergy themselves, though at first they had been highly pleased at having a prime minister once more taken from their own ranks, began to show the same dissatisfaction as the laity; partly because the proposal to abolish exemptions, which was certain to be renewed, touched themselves, and partly because they were so brought into contact with all classes of society that they could hardly avoid reflecting the general feeling. They also began to demand the convocation of the States-General, and at the same time complaints began to be made of the archbishop having attempted to conceal the increasing deficiencies of the exchequer by means palpably illegal, such as the appropriation of charitable funds which had been raised and set apart for the foundation and maintenance of hospitals, and of works of that character. He became alarmed, if not for the nation, at least for himself and for his place. He had reason. The Count de Provence had always disliked him. The Count d'Artois, though at first favorable to him had been alienated by his refusal, which in truth proceeded from his inability, to furnish money for the

payment of his debts. And though Vermond was still faithful to him, the Duchess de Polignac, whose interest with the queen was far greater than that of the abbé, had learnt to look upon him as one whose rashness and incompetency were imperilling, if not the safety of the throne, for that no one dreamed was at stake, at least the tranquillity of the country and the comfort of the king. The archbishop had recourse to all kinds of expedients. He even invited Necker to join his administration,* proposing to yield the controllership to him, and to retain for himself only the post of prime minister. Necker, however, judged, and no doubt rightly, that to accept the controllership under such a prime minister would be to accept certain failure and discredit; and, after some days' consideration, he refused to take office without absolute power over every branch of the government connected with the finances.

A very few days proved that on this occasion at least he had judged rightly for his own credit. The archbishop issued an edict nearly tantamount to a confession of national bankruptcy, by which he declared the bills of the treasury and also those of the national bank to be legal tender; endeavouring at the same time to render these shameful measures palatable by issuing another notice in which the king

* He employed the intervention of the imperial ambassador, the Count de Mercy. In the collection of M. Feuillet de Conches are letters from the count, from Necker, and from the queen on the subject, Nos. 123–127. A sentence in the queen's letter is remarkable as showing the soundness of her judgment in wishing Necker, should he belong to the existing or any other ministry, to be confined to his own department of finance, and also her sense of the king's weakness. She says to Mercy: "Je crains beaucoup que l'archevêque ne soit obligé de partir tout-à-fait, et alors quel homme prendre pour mettre à la tête de tout? Car il en faut un, surtout avec M. N. [Necker]. Il lui faut un frein. Le personnage au-dessus de moi n'en est pas en état."

promised the convocation of the States-General, and fixed the 1st of May in the next year as the day for their assembling. An ordinance published a few days later invited all men, and especially philosophers and literary men to send in suggestions as to the proper manner of electing and composing this great body.

De Brienne was not in intention a traitor. But if he had deliberately designed first to lower and then to destroy the authority of his sovereign, he could have adopted no course more certainly calculated to accomplish these ends than that which he pursued after the suspension of the Parliaments. He had made his royal master establish a Plenary Court without having taken the precaution of consulting even the habitual supporters of his administration, and, as the result proved, with such complete ignorance of their sentiments that the king had to submit to the degradation of having his commands disobeyed by the nobles and councillors whom he nominated as members, and of being consequently compelled to revoke his edict. And now he abandoned for his sovereign the power which belonged to him and to him alone, and which of all others at such a crisis was the most important to him to exercise with deliberation and firmness, and made it over to a body of men of no practical knowledge of the science of government, of no experience in affairs of state, and of whom a great number notoriously and avowedly meditated, or at least desired, vast changes in the constitution. It is hardly fair to blame him, as some have done, for promising the States-General at all, since, except so far as the character and opinions of those who advocated their convocation made it objectionable, there was no especial reason for

apprehending more danger from them than from the Notables. Their past history had been one of servility rather than of contumacy.* Their former meetings had tended rather to establish the authority of the crown than their own right or ability to resist its ordinances. But the whole regulation of the details; of the election of the members; and of their mode of deliberation and voting, belonged exclusively to the crown; and, as these were manifestly questions of primary importance, their decision could not be transferred to any other body without a loss of dignity, which was in itself not only a danger but a positive injury. Nor did so strange a sacrifice of the royal prerogative secure the archbishop, as he had hoped, the lasting good-will of those to whom he sacrificed it. In the last week of August a fresh edict appeared which in fact was only a natural development of the principle of the other measures relating to the treasury bills, and which announced that of the interest due to the fundholders only two-fifths would be paid in cash, while the other three-fifths were to be taken as a new loan secured by assignats bearing interest. This announcement, reducing by more than half the income derived from this source, which to many was their principal means of livelihood, proved fatal to him. The outcry was so universal and loud, that even the king, who had upheld him after all around him had clamoured for his dismissal, partly because he had become accustomed to him, and partly because his own weakness found a welcome encouragement in the archbishop's confidence, however groundless, could no longer find courage to retain him. He would not, however, dis-

* See "La Révolution," par Edgar Quinet, c. vii.

miss him; but by grants of valuable offices for his different relations, and the nomination of himself for a place in the sacred college which happened to be vacant, prevailed on him to resign both his offices.

His administration had been profitable for himself. Besides obtaining the cardinal's hat, he had been allowed to exchange his bishopric of Toulouse for the wealthier diocese of Sens, and he had also laid his hands on one or two rich abbacies and other valuable ecclesiastical preferments. But for the king and kingdom it had been ruinous beyond any preceding government. It had been a constant system of irritation and attempts at repression. The king, who had no wish but to consult the welfare of his people in every respect, to improve their condition, and even to gratify their wishes, was by his incessant and universal mismanagement made to appear grudging, tyrannical, and capricious. It is possible that a prompt and frank adoption of all the demands of the party headed by D'Epresménil, who showed by his subsequent conduct that he was sincerely attached to the proper authority and even to the person of the king, and who certainly demanded nothing incompatible with the dignity of a great monarch, might have averted the demand for the States-General, or at least might have given a very different complexion to that assembly. On the other hand, it is probable that uniform and uncompromising rigour might have crushed the opposition in the bud, and have postponed all reforms except such as succeeding ministers might have enabled Louis to make by his own authority. But De Brienne had the unskilfulness to grant even favours in such a manner as to deprive them of their grace. When he conceded, he showed that he did so unwillingly, and that he would have preferred refusals and

severities, if he had thought them equally safe. Men saw that all that they obtained was wrung from his fears, not granted by policy, still less from any goodwill that he entertained towards either Parliament or people; and being thus driven to regard him with suspicion and dislike, they almost inevitably learnt to look on his royal master with the same feelings.

CHAPTER XXXV.

THERE was no question who was to be the new controller. The outcry against the archbishop had hardly been more prompted by hatred of him than by an universal eagerness for the recall of Necker as the only man capable of saving the nation: we have seen that the queen coincided in this feeling; and accordingly he was at once reappointed to the controllership. He did not succeed to De Brienne's title of prime minister, but it was understood that the conditions for which he had stipulated when the archbishop invited him to join him were now to be granted, and that he was to exercise a supreme control over every department of the State which had the least connexion with the finances. If universal willingness to submit to his government could have made a minister's task easy, Necker might well have congratulated himself on his return to office. Paris was unusually full, for a severe scarcity in the surrounding districts had driven a vast number of the labouring classes to the capital in search of work or relief; and they, catching the enthusiasm of the shopkeepers and manufacturers of the city, thought their distress terminated by the restoration to power of the great financier. Unhappily their joy had a fatal result. Many of the most vehement politicians illuminated their houses: and the mob having dressed out an effigy of the archbishop in his new cardinal's robes, made it do penance torch in hand in several of the

public squares, and burnt it in front of Henry IV.'s statue; proceeded to attack all whom they suspected of not sharing their sentiments, breaking the windows of houses which were not illuminated, and finally working themselves up to such acts of violence and riot that it became necessary to call out the soldiery. They even ventured to measure themselves with the troops, who were at last forced to fire in their own defence; nor could peace and order be restored till a considerable number had been killed, and some of the soldiers seriously injured. But this slaughter, melancholy as it was, scarcely abated the joy at the change of ministry; and did not in the least diminish the confidence with which the moneyed interest, whose operations, then as now, were commonly looked on as the best barometer of prosperity, regarded it. The funds rose, and though interest in consequence fell, loans to any amount were freely offered; the national credit revived in a moment, as if the solvency or insolvency of a mighty nation depended solely on a single man, and him a foreigner.

In the whole kingdom there appeared to be but one man who did not share the general exultation, and that was Necker himself. He had seen the blunder which he had committed in formerly resigning his post,* long before his retirement had produced its worst fruits; and, besides that, his vanity led him to disparage every measure which did not originate with himself, much more any which seemed contrary to his principles or system. It was manifest that the archbishop had not only left everything in confusion, but that his most recent financial measures had been tantamount to acts of bankruptcy; and so keenly

* "Considérations sur la Rév. Franç."—Madame de Staël, i. 90, 157.

did Necker feel the difficulties and discredit into which he had brought the finances, that he forgot, in comparison, his contest with Calonne; and declared that the fifteen months of the archbishop's administration were what had made his task impracticable.* Yet the grossest of the archbishop's errors were those of which Necker thought least; and which he himself repeated even with exaggeration. For, unluckily, he saw only half the work which he had to do. He had to confront both financial and political difficulties; but, though the latter were by far the graver, he saw only the former, and thought that when they were overcome, the others would right themselves as it were by inevitable consequence.

De Brienne had committed the grossest financial blunders; and, moreover, adding corruption to incapacity, he and Lamoignon, who had been the partner of his fall, and who was equally grasping in his disposition, had so drained the treasury of its ready money, that the whole sum which Necker found in it did not exceed half a million of francs.† This difficulty, however, was at once got over for the moment by the promptness with which the capitalists volunteered their aid to his successor.‡ And the measures which Necker instantly took to maintain the public credit which thus spontaneously revived, removed all apprehension of its immediate

* "Ah," me dit-il, "que ne m'a-t-on donné ces quinze mois de l'Archevêque de Sens? A présent c'est trop tard."—De Staël, i. 156.

† Madame de Staël says a quarter of a million. But Amedée Renée quotes Necker himself for the admission that, "soit en argent, soit en valeurs," the sum was 500,000 livres. The difference of £100,000 is hardly worth speaking of, except as the comparison of the two statements shows the inclination of the minister's daughter to *colour* every circumstance connected with her father's administration and those of his rivals.

‡ "Le lendemain les capitalistes lui apporterent des sécours considérables."—De Staël, i. 159.

recurrence. But De Brienne had also committed the grossest political blunders; and the worst of these Necker himself repeated, while those which he sought to remedy he handled with such unskilful precipitation that he inflicted fresh wounds on the king's dignity by his mere mode of treatment. The recent announcement that everything which was done in the king's name was to be taken as his personal act, made it more difficult to undo any measures which were repented of than would have been the case if they had been regarded as a part of the policy of one minister which was liable to be abandoned by his successor. But, heedless of this obvious consideration, Necker proceeded to reverse many of the measures most recently adopted, as if the king had been no party to them: not only did he recall all those who had been banished, and pardon those who had been imprisoned, but he suppressed the Grand Bailliages and revoked the edict for the Plenary Court, with an abruptness which seemed as if the intention were to mark a disapproval of the policy which had established them; and he recalled the Parliament and allowed the councillors to enter Paris in a body, and in a triumphal procession, without making a single concession to the royal authority, which their last acts had insulted in the most deliberate manner. Their return was accompanied by a renewal of the riots which had been lately quelled with such difficulty, and which were now carried to a still more dangerous extent. It was evident that the ringleaders were abundantly supplied with money, and the authorities had reason to suspect that the Duke d'Orleans was once more fomenting the troubles of the Government for his own ends. The police and even the guard-houses were attacked in open day. Squibs of huge size and firebrands

were thrown about the streets at night; while the cries with which the peaceable inhabitants were terrified openly proclaimed the return of the Parliament as a measure to which the king had been compelled to consent against his will. And those who were supposed to have disapproved of the conduct of the members, or to regret their recall, if they ventured to show themselves in the streets were branded as Royalists (the first time that such a name had ever been applied in France as a term of reproach), and exposed to gross insult and outrage.

Such an exhibition of the feelings of the mass of the people, more dangerous, perhaps, if it was the effect of the machinations of powerful leaders working in secret than if it was a spontaneous ebullition, might have made a prudent minister pause before he took any other step calculated further to weaken the royal authority, or to encourage those who in any way or any point were striving to establish an independence of it. Yet his very next step was a repetition of De Brienne's worst political blunder in a worse form. The very first act of the Parliament after its restoration was a more flagrant usurpation than it had ever before attempted. Necker looking on the king's promise as pledged to the convocation of the States-General, though he himself foresaw nothing but mischief from such an assembly, brought down an edict ratifying that promise for registration, and the Parliament appended to their record a resolution that the States should be assembled according to the forms observed in 1614. It was a vote that nullified itself; for, as we have seen,* the ancient records were so defective that many of the most important details concerning

* Vide supra, vol. i. p. 202.

the assembly of that year were absolutely unknown.* Indeed scarcely anything was known beyond the number of its members, which was 464; the proportions of the different classes, the nobles and the clergy being nearly equal in number, and the third estate or the commons being rather more than two-fifths of the whole; and the fact that each class had debated in a separate chamber. But though the vote could therefore have no real validity, it was an open and illegal attempt to take the direction out of the king's hand: and as such ought to have warned Necker of the necessity of being from the first on his guard against all such encroachments on the royal prerogative. Even had it not been incontestably the king's right to decide all the details of the proposed assembly, the uncertainty that existed on the subject would have supplied an able minister, who could appreciate the spirit of the time, and the overwhelming importance of the impending meeting and of the questions which must be submitted to it, with a sufficient plea for assuming the whole direction. And his subsequent steps showed that he was aware of this, for the details were at last settled by the king's order; and if he could issue such an order after taking advice, it was plain that he could have done so before or without taking advice. But Necker was both frightened and puzzled. He had no definite ideas on the subject; only a loose general desire to establish legislative chambers like those which he had

* "If it be asked who were qualified to elect and who to be elected at these meetings, and by what number of deputies the clergy, the noblesse, or the tiers état respectively of the several bailliages were to be represented, I can only answer that these are questions on which the Notables in the time of Louis XVI. were unable to form any clear opinion, and which have not, I think, been satisfactorily elucidated in later times."—"Stephen's Lectures," 10.

beheld in England: a notion that the States-General in former times, whatever they might have been, had certainly been very unlike the English parliament; a fear lest he might be unable to bring them now into such a shape; and another fear lest, if he failed to do so, he might be blamed as having taken too much on himself, and might in consequence lose the popularity which was at all times his first object. To a man of such a frame of mind and such vague principles of action it is not strange that the points of least importance were those which seemed to present the greatest difficulties; that the details on which everything ultimately turned were regarded as those of the slightest consequence and easiest of arrangement.

The circumstance which chiefly troubled him was the custom that each class should have a separate chamber; because under such an arrangement the two higher classes, whose privileges it was for the national welfare to diminish or abrogate, would be able always to overrule the lower, whose rights it was equally desirable to extend. Indeed he believed, and perhaps with reason, that it was this triple division which had rendered all former meetings of the States-General barren of results; and in a great degree had led to their discontinuance. And it seems never to have occurred to him that the king by himself had authority to remedy this so far as to unite the nobles and clergy, and thus form a chamber of the privileged classes analogous to the British House of Lords. Perhaps he doubted how far such an upper chamber would be acceptable to or influential with the nation. And he was also perplexed by the differences existing among the nobles themselves. For those who bore this name in France in nowise resembled the English nobles, among whom the youngest

baron from the day of his creation is a peer of the most ancient duke, his equal in every right and privilege. The prodigious number of French nobles was a bar to any such equality. It was reckoned that they amounted to a hundred thousand; and as offices conferring nobility could be purchased almost at any moment, the number was daily increasing. But those who owed their rank to this or some similar cause derived no benefit from it but exemption from taxation, eligibility for commissions in the army, a right to vote as nobles at elections to any representative assembly, and after four-and-twenty years a right to be elected themselves; but they could not even be received at court as nobles till their patents were four hundred years old; and the most vainglorious among them never dreamt of claiming an equality with the nobles of the old historic families, as they were called, the Grammonts, the Noailles, or the Montmorencies. Of such great houses no antiquarian could reckon up above two hundred, and many of them were greatly decayed in wealth and influence.

The priests were believed to be almost equal in number to the nobles, though some estimates made them considerably more numerous. No one, however, computed them at more than two hundred thousand; and Necker, who in all his political opinions was governed mainly by abstract principles,* felt the inconsistency of allowing the representatives of these two bodies, which certainly did not contain a third of a million, a preponderating authority over those of the twenty-four millions who made up the rest of the population. How to deal with this difficulty he did not know. But a far graver part of the question was

* "Il ne connaissait pas les hommes; il les mesurait tous dans son cabinet avec un compas philosophique."—"Mém. de M. du Bouillé," p. 68.

how to deal with the representation of the third estate, the commons. Hitherto the number of their representatives, though greater than that of either nobles or clergy, had never equalled that of both combined. But those who had most loudly demanded the convocation of the States were equally earnest in urging that the representatives of the commons, the most numerous body in the States, should also form at least half the assembly. And since, so long as each class voted by the majority of its chamber, the number of each signified but little, a second demand was made, that the three classes should sit together, and vote individually; which would, in fact, transfer the predominance from the two higher classes to the third, and make that the absolute master of all the decisions of the assembly, and consequently of the State.

Necker leant to this proposal. It resembled the arrangements that had been made for the provincial assemblies sufficiently to make him think that precedent was in favour of it: and he had an unreasoning confidence in the virtue of mankind, and in their submission to strict logic;* leaving out of his calculation the influence of feelings and passions, and ignoring too the difference between bodies of men and individuals, and the extent to which the spirit of party acts on men of the greatest purity of intention and

* The Marquis du Bouillé remonstrated with him earnestly and forcibly against his plans:—"Je lui dis qu'il armait le peuple contre les premiers ordres de l'État; et que, les lui livrant désarmés ceux-ci éprouveraient bientôt les effets de sa vengeance, dirigée par les deux passions les plus actives du cœur humain, l'intérêt et l'amour propre. J'entrai dans les détails. Il me répondit froidement, en levant les yeux au ciel, qu'il fallait bien compter sur les vertus morales des hommes."—"Mém.," p. 70. Madame de Staël herself gives a similar account of her father's motives:—"Se fiant trop, il faut l'avouer, à l'empire de la raison."—"Considérations," &c., i. 171.

calmness of temper, and leads them to measures of which in cooler moments they disapprove. He was influenced, too, by a total misapprehension of the questions likely to come before the States-General both in their character and gravity, and of the objects of the reformers. He believed that all that they aimed at was a return to the ancient theory of the constitution. Looking, with his narrow and professional view, to the embarrassments of the treasury as the one great evil which included all others, he thought the one great remedy lay in the restoring to the representatives of the nation their control over the taxation, which would of necessity involve a control over the expenditure. If, as a consequence of this, the exemptions of the privileged classes were abolished; and if, besides this, improved security were given for the liberty of the subject by the abolition of lettres de câchet and a more regular administration of the law,* he thought that the most clamorous would be satisfied. He failed to see, what indeed few did as yet see, that in the hearts of the mass of the people a discontent had long been smouldering, not at a single privilege of the nobility, but against the whole system of which the immunity from pecuniary contributions was but a single and not the most important branch; and that what was aimed at by many of those who aspired to become leaders, was a reconstruction of the whole fabric of society.

It was but indirectly that the exemption of the

* "The administration of justice was partial, venal, infamous. I have, in conversation with many very sensible men in different parts of the kingdom, met with something of content with their government in all other respects than this; but upon the question of expecting justice to be really and fairly administered, every one confessed that there was no such thing to be looked for."—Arthur Young's "Travels in France," p. 537. Ed. 1792.

nobles from taxation affected the lowest and most numerous class. But they still claimed other privileges, relics of the old feudal system which pressed heavily upon every resident within their domains. The game laws were intolerable: the peasants might not weed their plots of ground, lest they should disturb the young partridges or leverets, nor manure the soil with anything that might injure their flavour. Other grievances pressed on their daily life and means of subsistence still more heavily. They were forced to grind their corn at the lord's mill, to bake their bread in his oven, to press their grapes at his wine-press; paying for each act whatever dues he might think fit to exact, and often having their bread or their wine spoilt by the delays which such a system inevitably caused. Some of the rights of seignory can hardly be mentioned in the present more decorous age; some were so ridiculous that it is inconceivable how their very absurdity had not led to their disuse. In the marshy districts of Brittany when the lady was confined the peasantry were bound to spend their time in beating the waters to keep the frogs quiet that she might not be disturbed with their croaking. And if ever this or any other right were dispensed with, the dispensation was made the pretext for levying payments that were little less burdensome:* in many instances the principal income of the proprietors being derived from these rights or commutations, which were, in fact, as injurious to themselves as to those from whom they were derived, since they checked industry, and threw vast quantities of land

* Arthur Young, p. 535–7. He gives a list of about two dozen burdens to which the lower classes were liable: barage, steilage, bordelage, ban de vin, ban d'août, &c. &c., which he pronounces untranslatable in his own time, and of which it is impossible to find out the meaning in any ordinary dictionary.—Compare De Tocqueville, "L'Ancien Régime," &c., p. 42–45.

out of cultivation. It was plain that no reform would be worth anything which did not wholly sweep away customs like these, for which abuses was too mild a word. They were abominations. It was equally plain that great tact, and prudence, and temper would be requisite to carry out a reform which should effect this, and yet stop short of revolution. And the more evident and undeniable these truths were, the more palpable was also the necessity that, since the promise to convoke the States-General had deprived the king of the opportunity of redressing the evils complained of by his single authority, the arrangement and constitution of the assembly which he was about to call to his aid should be entirely preserved to him.

But Necker failed to see this, and adopted, with an alteration for the worse, the most pernicious of all his predecessor's measures. When De Brienne had invited the learned and scientific men of the nation to give their opinions on the election, composition, and arrangement of the intended assembly, he was addressing himself to men who had no opportunity for combined action, nor necessarily any means of publishing to the people at large the advice which they might offer to the minister. But Necker now solicited similar counsel from a regular assembly convoked for the express and sole purpose of giving it; and whose decision must consequently be inevitably and immediately known to the whole kingdom. He re-assembled the Notables who had been dissolved in the preceding May, that they might pronounce on the question that his predecessor had proposed to the philosophers, namely, how the States-General should be elected, and how they should conduct their deliberations; and the way in which he dealt with their judgment was even more singular than his

conduct in asking it, and puts him in this respect in unfavorable contrast with his predecessor. There can be no doubt that when the archbishop submitted the same question to the scholars and men of science of the nation, he intended to be guided by their opinion; and it might have been supposed that much more must Necker have proposed to adopt the advice of a body which spoke with a far greater authority than could be ascribed to any number of individuals, however distinguished they might be by literary or scientific talent. But Necker showed (it was the only proof of an independent judgment that he exhibited in any part of the business), that he had only invited the opinion of the Notables in the hope that it might coincide with his own desire to gratify the most advanced section of the reformers or champions of the commons, and that he was prepared to make but little account of their recommendations if they ran in a contrary direction. Though in many cases he spoke and acted as if all men regulated their conduct by strict logic and the purest reason, his own actions were under the influence of two feelings as remote as possible from the dictates of statesmanlike wisdom, or even of ordinary knowledge of men: a blind confidence in the virtue and sober sense of mankind, and an equally indiscriminate thirst for popularity. There was no doubt at all which decision would be most popular. It was, indeed, impossible that that determination could fail to be the most acceptable to the commons which should give them the greatest weight in the contest that, in the approaching assembly, must arise between them and the privileged classes. The Notables, of whom by far the greater portion belonged to those classes, naturally viewed the matter with different eyes; and the Parlia-

ment, even when showing the greatest eagerness for the meeting of the States-General, had been equally clear in their opinion against what was commonly called the duplication of the third estate, or the project of giving them as many representatives as were to be returned by both the other orders. This was the great point on which it was. seen from the first that all others hinged; and this was the chief subject of discussion submitted to the Notables.

They met in the autumn,* in the same form as at the beginning of the year.† Their deliberations were brief. One committee only, it is remarkable that it was that over which the Count de Provence presided, recommended the duplication. The other six committees protested against it; and their final recommendation to the king was that the representatives of the commons, though superior in number to those of either the nobles or the clergy, should be inferior to those of the two orders united. Common sense would have led Necker to expect such a decision; but it appears not to have been what he expected, and still less what he wished. And he at once appealed from this the council of his own selection to the invisible tribunal of

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* The date is of no great importance, but it is remarkable as showing the difficulty of giving a correct account of any of these transactions with what variations it is stated. Amedée Renée fixes it as December 6, Lacretelle as November 9. Madame de Staël, though not mentioning the precise day, implies that it was at the latest early in October, for she speaks of "les premiers jours de Décembre, 1788, deux mois après l'assemblée des Notables."—p. 174.

† Historians have commonly stated that in this second assembly the number of committees (*bureaux*) was six instead of seven; but the Marquis du Bouillé, who had a seat in it, assures us that was not the case. "Cette assemblée des Notables fut divisée comme la précédente en sept bureaux, présidés par les princes du sang."—p. 62. The princes of the blood were Monsieur, the Count d'Artois, the Duke d'Orleans, the Prince de Condé, the Duke de Bourbon, the Prince de Conti, and the Duke de Penthièvre.

public opinion;* that being the compass by which he was resolved to steer, and which he in his infatuation looked upon as the sole guide to which the king in policy and wisdom should submit himself. His subsequent defence against the accusations of those who reproached him with having thrown overboard the advice which he had himself solicited, was that he could not trust the privileged orders to consent to all the reforms on which the commons had set their hearts, and which were indispensable for the deliverance of the nation at large, including the privileged orders themselves, from its difficulties. But the Notables had hardly resolved on the advice which they would give; and if he had made up his mind to disregard it, he at least had made no announcement of his intention, when two intimations, which could neither be mistaken nor recalled, were given, that the privileged orders were not as unmanageable as he was resolved to think them. On the 5th of December the Parliament, at a meeting in the minutes of which it is especially recorded that the peers were present and that D'Epresménil was the principal speaker, passed a long and carefully drawn resolution in several clauses, which (after declaring that, as to the number of deputies of which the States-General ought to consist, and the proportions in which they ought to represent each order, there was no law whatever and had been no uniform practice, and that therefore the regulation of such matters must belong entirely to the king), proceeded to point out the principal subjects which the States-General ought to consider, and the chief advantages which might be expected to accrue to the nation from their meeting

* "Pendant ce temps M. Necker étudia constamment l'esprit public, comme la boussole à laquelle, dans cette circonstance, les décisions du roi devaient se conformer."—"Consid. sur la Rév. Fr.," i. 172.

with the sanction and consent of the king. And in the front of all was placed the abolition of all exemptions from taxation hitherto enjoyed by any class whatever;* and a few days afterwards the majority of the princes of the royal family held a meeting, at which they drew up a memorial which they presented to Louis, and which showed with equal clearness their opinion that the day of exclusive privileges was past, and that the nobles and clergy would no longer desire to maintain them. Being, as they were, the first subjects of the king, they looked on themselves as speaking in the interest of and in some degree as the mouthpiece of the most aristocratic class: and, though the prospect of a surrender of the offensive privileges which they thus held out was not unconditional, the conditions they attached to it were eminently reasonable. They represented to the king (and it is creditable to their acuteness that they were the first to see the fact), that the State was in danger; that the spirit of the people was in a state of fermentation which threatened to bring about a revolution; that a deliberate principle of insubordination and contempt for all existing laws and usages was being propagated and fostered by pamphleteers and writers of all kinds, every one of whom put himself forward as a legislator. They urged upon the king that these considerations proved most forcibly how necessary it was for him to maintain in the approaching States-General the old precedents, that the numbers of the representatives of the commons should not be doubled, and that the three orders should meet in separate chambers; two

* The chief portions of the edict are quoted by Madame de Staël, i. 174. Other clauses urged the establishment of the doctrine of the responsibility of ministers, and of the freedom of the press, and of an improved administration of justice.

rules which they did not hesitate to pronounce the foundations of the monarchy.* They alleged themselves to be in the present instance speaking for the whole body of the nobles, when they declared that if the Third Estate would cease from attacking the privileged orders and endeavouring to bring them into contempt, both nobles and clergy would cheerfully renounce their exclusive privileges, and especially their exemption from taxation, and would consent to bear their share of the public burdens with complete equality; and, lest there should be any doubt as to the right of the princes to put themselves forward as the spokesmen of the nobles in general, thirty of the highest nobles, all dukes or peers of France, addressed a separate letter to the sovereign, declaring that they were willing unconditionally and absolutely to renounce every previous privilege or exemption which they possessed.

But all these circumstances, and the proof which was thus given that the nobles would not let their ancient privileges stand in the way of the reforms which were desired, weighed nothing with Necker when put in the scale against the current of public opinion which he gathered from the pamphlets which the princes denounced, and which were almost unanimous in favour of granting the duplication of the commons. The princes, as we have seen, while they looked on the opposite course as the only safe one, insisted equally on the necessity of the different orders deliberating as before in separate chambers; and on this point Necker entirely agreed with them. But so fearful was he of diminishing the popularity for which

* "Bases inébranlables de la monarchie Française." A great portion of the memorial is given by Amedée Renée in a note. It was signed by all the royal princes but the Count de Provence and the Duke d'Orleans.

he hoped as the fruit of his gratifying the people on the duplication of the Third Estate by making any other regulation that might be less palatable to them, that he passed over that matter for the present; resolved to leave it undetermined till the States should assemble, and then to allow them to settle it: trusting, against all probability, even could he have relied on his own firmness, that even after having given the commons power to enforce their own views, he should be able to persuade them to abandon them in deference to his opinion.

Accordingly in the last week of the year he issued an edict in the king's name, in which it was ordained that the number of representatives to be returned to the States-General should be 1200; 300 from the nobles, 300 from the clergy, and 600 from the Third Estate. Every tax-payer, even to the smallest amount, was to be an elector; every one was eligible to be elected as a representative.* This last article, when coupled with a subsequent edict which granted all the deputies a stipend, though apparently unnoticed at the time, had no little influence in deteriorating the character of the assembly, from the incentive which it held out to men of no property, mere adventurers, to seek election as a means of livelihood;† and also in determining its subsequent course, since men who

* Necker's own writings, and the work of Madame de Staël to which reference has so often been made, certainly represent his opinion as throughout favorable to the duplication of the Third Estate. But M. Droz, on whom Amedée Renée relies, justly calling him a most diligent and scrupulous writer, affirms that Necker wavered for a long time, and only made up his mind at the last moment.

† See "Mém. de M. du Bouillé," p. 68. The marquis seems to imply that the giving a salary to the representatives was a part of the original edict. But this can hardly have been the case, otherwise the demand of a salary (traitement pécuniaire) for them would not have formed an article in the cahiers, which it did in numerous instances.

had everything to gain and nothing to lose from revolution were sure to be eager for the most extreme changes. The queen herself was present at the council at which the edict was drawn up, and it is said approved of its purport; looking on the nobles as the body whose opposition the crown had most to dread, from the resistance that they had shown to the proposals of the king's last ministers, De Brienne and Calonne. The edict, as was natural, produced the greatest excitement. The Notables themselves were in the highest degree indignant, looking upon it as a deliberate insult to have convened them for the express purpose of asking their advice, and then to have rejected it when offered with a consent so little short of unanimity. But the reforming party regarded it as an unmodified triumph; caring little that they had not also been indulged with the meeting in one chamber, since the representatives of the commons were now insured the power of settling that point in their own way when they met. And each party began to occupy themselves with zeal and activity in preparations for the coming elections.

The lowest classes had something else to think of during the winter; for it was a season of unusual distress. The harvest in France had entirely failed, and in most other countries of Northern Europe had been scanty, while the winter, which set in unusually early, was also one of almost unprecedented severity.* It was in such a crisis that Necker's real abilities displayed themselves to the highest advantage. The king and queen made, as before, the greatest exertions and sacrifices to relieve the sufferings of the poor. The Duke d'Orleans found a nobler channel for his

* The first week in December the Seine was frozen over sufficiently to bear skaters.

largesses than before, and poured forth his wealth with a liberality which, whatever may have been his secret object, was most judicious and useful. But no efforts of even the richest and highest individuals could have availed much against the universality of privation and suffering. It required all the resources of the Government, applied with energy and sagacity, to meet the evil. At such a time the revival of the public credit which had followed the change of ministry was all-important; but in addition to the benefit derived from that cause, Necker put forth not only all his financial skill, but lavished also his own private fortune with the most ungrudging magnanimity on the relief of the poor throughout the kingdom. The promptitude and practical sagacity with which he took his measures, when the object was to find money and food, contrasted in the most marked manner with the hesitation, timidity, and inconsistency which he displayed when he had to grapple with constitutional questions. He feared no responsibility. The moment that the deficiency of the harvest was ascertained, he prohibited the exportation of corn; he offered premiums to those dealers who might import it; he formed magazines in different districts; and took steps to facilitate the transport of food from one province to another. He took a vast number of labourers and artisans out of work into the employ of the State; he did not fear to make the State itself a dealer, expending no less a sum than seventy millions of livres of public money in the purchase of grain in foreign countries; and, as specie was scarce, and the merchants of Amsterdam refused the French paper, he pledged the whole of his private fortune in case there should be any difficulty in the prompt and satisfactory payment for the stores which were indispensable for those poor labourers for

whose well-doing, while he was minister, he thus seemed to regard himself as responsible. The historian who is forced to record so much that is fatal to his character as a statesman may well find satisfaction in being able to speak of measures and acts which do such credit to him as a man, and which prove that, however deficiencies of political capacity and weaknesses of character may have unfitted him for the duties which he was called upon to discharge, at the most critical period of modern history, as a reformer of a mighty kingdom, yet no one ever brought to his task a sincerer love for the people whom he was called upon to govern, or a more unflinching desire to perform his duty to them at the cost of any sacrifice to himself.

As the time drew near for the meeting of the States-General, which was fixed for the 1st of May, 1789, the preparations for it absorbed the attention of the whole nation, to the exclusion of every other subject. There was a respite even from financial edicts, because the embarrassments of the revenue, like every other evil, were to be cured in the coming Assembly, and by no other means. Indeed, no person or body was so supine as the minister. Not only did Necker, full of unaccountable security, take no trouble whatever to influence the elections,* but he omitted even to prescribe the method in which they were to be conducted; and each bailiwick was left to settle that important matter in its own way. A French private gentleman and a young English barrister, on their way from London to Paris, were breakfasting at the inn at Montreuil, and heard from their landlord that the

* "On lui proposa d'influencer les élections, pour donner quelques partisans au Gouvernement dans les États; il rejeta, comme immorale, cette démarche."—"Mém. de M. de Bouillé," p. 68.

whole town was in confusion because of the election, which no one knew how to manage. There were no precedents to guide them; voting papers, poll clerks, returning officers, were things unknown. The travellers thought it would be a fine thing to take the matter into their own hands; and, though they could not help laughing at their own impudence, sent for a sheet of paper and drew up rules for the proceedings, which the landlord carried off to the scene of deliberations, full of glee at the consequence which would attach to himself from thus extricating his townsmen from their difficulty. When the travellers reached Paris they had the satisfaction of reading in the daily papers that, of the whole kingdom, Montreuil had finished its election first, and in the most orderly manner.* But the people in general, and especially the ardent reformers, were less indifferent.

Clubs were formed, one, under the auspices of the Duke d'Orleans, giving itself the significant name of Les Enragés,† at which every subject that could possibly come before the Assembly, every question which had ever been raised by the most speculative writer on politics, was discussed, and some of which even printed reports of their debates. Writers poured forth pamphlets by the thousand, the greater part having for their object to inflame the people against those whom they called the privileged orders, and to inculcate ideas of the universal equality of mankind. Above all, every body of electors throughout the kingdom was busy in drawing up its cahiers, or instructions to

* Dumont, "Souvenirs sur Mirabeau," p. 21. The young English lawyer, his companion, was Mr. (afterwards Sir) Samuel Romilly.

† "Mémoires de M. de Bouillé," p. 67. Arthur Young, in January, 1790, speaks of the Enragés as if by that time they had amalgamated with the Jacobins.—P. 268.

its representative what he should urge or resist; for the members of the States-General had at no period been looked on in any other light but that of delegates, expected to act, not according to their own judgment, but according to the carefully-drawn command of their constituents; the principle being so universally recognised that in the second year of the National Assembly, Mirabeau, as will be seen, considered that the king would be supported by the nation in repealing many of its enactments, on the ground that they were contrary to the instructions furnished to the deputies. The mischief of the system, which was not yet universally admitted even in England,* was hitherto unsuspected in France. But to any thinking man it would have been abundantly revealed by the nature of the instructions now framed; which, though naturally different, as proceeding from different classes, and dictated by different interests, when taken together, demanded the abolition of almost every single law and custom established in the whole country.† Many, of course, claimed the removal of

* See Burke's speech at Bristol, 1780.

† "Quand je viens à réunir ensemble tous ces vœus particuliers, je m'aperçois avec une sorte de terreur que ce qu'on réclame est l'abolition simultanée et systématique de toutes les lois et tous les usages ayant cours dans le pays."—De Tocqueville, "L'Ancien Régime," &c., p. 211. The purport of a number of cahiers is given by Arthur Young, p. 553. On the other hand, the latest writer on the subject, M. Edgar Quinet, is full of admiration for the cahiers in a mass. "Quand le dégoût l'emporte, et que ma plume tombe des mains, je relis ces cahiers de '89. Je vois tout ce que la nature avait mis originairement de beau et de vraiment noble dans l'âme des Français," i. 28. But the cahier which he proceeds to quote as a specimen, that of Toul, does not bear out his panegyric; it is an impractical metaphor, instead of a statesmanlike or sensible demand. "Il est une monnaie idéale mais puissante, bien précieuse et bien chère dans un royaume comme la France; c'est le trésor de l'honneur, trésor inépuisable si l'on y sait penser avec sagesse. Les États-Généraux rendront au peuple et à la postérité un service signalé s'ils trouvent moyen de refrapper cette monnaie nationale."—Ibid., p. 29.

notorious and intolerable abuses. Many were framed apparently on the model of the British constitution; such, for instance, as that which required the members to provide that henceforth taxes should only be granted from year to year. Many were flagrantly unreasonable and ridiculous in their pettiness, as those which demanded the alienation of all the domains of the crown, and even the suppression of the royal stud. Many were absurd, from their visionary character, like that which insisted that above all things the States-General should respect the rights of man; or, from their trifling nature, descending even to matters connected with the regulations of the theatres. One or two cahiers of the commons required the deputy to insist upon a measure analogous to the self-denying ordinance of the Long Parliament, that no member should accept any place, pension, grace, or favour, which in effect was afterwards adopted by the National Assembly, and was found as mischievous in its consequence as its model had proved a century and a half earlier in England. The cahiers of the two higher orders displayed, in general, a wise and conciliatory spirit. There was hardly one which intimated an unwillingness to consent to that equality of taxation which had been the stumbling-block of every ministry for many years; though the nobles were not in every instance inclined to surrender other privileges to which they clung rather as a mark of rank than from any particular desire to exert them oppressively. On the other hand, they showed more anxiety than either of the other classes for those great safeguards of freedom, the abolition of the power of arbitrary imprisonment, and the periodical convocation of the States-General with legislative power.*. The clergy, too, were even

* Louis Blanc, "Histoire de la Révolution," ii. p. 188.

authorized to agree to measures of toleration, of which, indeed, those in the highest place had very generally shown themselves advocates, when they approved, as they did, of the recent edict in favour of the Protestants. It is remarkable that none seemed to have attacked an abuse which was amongst the grossest of all, and certainly the parent of more evils than any other, the practice of selling offices and magistracies; and which required to be guarded against the more especially that it was continually on the increase. Still, taken altogether, the different cahiers amounted to a demand for a complete and instant reconstruction of society in every part. And it seemed to occur to no one that such a change could not possibly be accomplished without a convulsion of the whole fabric, a moral earthquake which might lay everything in ruins, and was as likely to destroy what was good or beautiful as what was unsightly or pernicious.

When the elections were completed the composition of the whole assembly was seen at once to be singular and unexpected. It was well calculated to excite uneasiness in any man of statesmanlike foresight, if such existed in France, as it did in the breast of one great political philosopher in England, who was watching the course of events with deep and prophetic anxiety. Even among the nobles the list of representatives contained but a small portion of their leading men.* Of the clergy, more than two-thirds came from its lower orders. Of those of the Third Estate, not fewer than 374 were lawyers, and those not the most distinguished members of the profession, but obscure country practitioners, attorneys, and notaries; while the list was made up of medical men,

* This had also been the case in 1614. Vide supra, vol. i. p. 205.

artists, chiefly such as had but little employment, and unknown though busy writers. In the whole Assembly there were not a hundred and fifty members who could be called men of property.* It was an assembly, from its very nature, ripe for the most extreme measures, and men were not wanting to foresee and foretell its character. A celebrated court preacher, Beauregard, who had formerly been a Jesuit, had ventured even to foretell that the results of the coming meeting would be an open proscription of religion, the profanation of the churches, and the enthroning of Venus in the place of the living God.† The time came when the precision with which the prediction was verified led men to look on the preacher as one inspired, though at the moment its apparently incredible character caused it to be passed over without notice as the raving of insanity. But, beside the forebodings of evil which it was not unreasonable to entertain from the composition of the assembly itself, there were not wanting indications also of the temper in which the Parisian populace was awaiting its opening, and which was likely reciprocally to act on, and to be acted on, by such an assembly in a most dangerous manner.

There was no place where the elections for the com-

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* "Mémoires du M. de Bouillé," p. 75. Burke, "Reflections," &c., declares, "From the moment I read the list I saw distinctly, and very nearly as it happened, all that was to follow."

† The following is an extract from his sermon, quoted by Lacretelle:—"Oui, vos temples, Seigneur, seront dépouillés et détruits, vos fêtes abolies; votre nom blasphémé, votre culte proscrit. Mais qu'entends-je, Grand Dieu! que vois-je? Aux saints cantiques qui faisaient retentir les voûtes sacrées en votre honneur, succèdent des chants lubriques et profanes. Et toi, divinité infâme du paganisme, infâme Vénus, tu viens ici même prendre audacieusement la place du Dieu Vivant; t'asseoir sur le trône du Saint des Saints, et recevoir l'encens coupable de tes nouveaux adorateurs."—Lac., vii. 11.

mons had been marked with greater disorder and delay than at Paris, where they were actually not completed when the States met.* The advocates of extreme measures, chiefly partisans of the Duke d'Orleans, put forth one list of candidates; the moderate party strove to secure the return of another list, the most prominent name in which was that of Reveillon, a wealthy papermaker of the Faubourg St. Antoine. They seemed so likely to succeed that their antagonists became furious and desperate. In the last week of April they spread a report that Reveillon had spoken with severity of the artisans of the city as overpaid and overfed, had proposed to reduce their daily wages, and had said that potatoes were food good enough for them. The story was not very probable, for he was a man distinguished for unusual liberality to his own workmen, and during the rigour of the preceding winter had kept them all at full wages in spite of the slackness of his trade at that season. But it was sufficient as a pretext for an attack on him which should intimidate his whole party. For many days bands of ferocious-looking men had been flocking into the city from the country districts, ragged in their clothes, but armed with heavy bludgeons, and, as was subsequently ascertained, well supplied with money. Their bandit-like appearance had excited general alarm, when, on the 28th, news was brought to the Baron de Besenval, the commander of the Guards, that a mob of several thousand men had collected in and about the Place Royale, which, after reading a mock sentence professing to have been passed by the Third Estate, and condemn-

* Dumont, p. 29. Louis Blanc, ii. 198. For the attack on Reveillon and its motives see also Croker's "Review of Thiers' History—'Essays on the Revolution,'" p. 57.

ing Reveillon to be hanged, had burnt him in effigy, and was marching to attack his house. A sergeant's guard was at once sent to protect him, but found the rioters so numerous that they were wholly unable to act. Before they could be reinforced the mob had forced their way into the house, plundering and destroying everything; and, when some stronger bodies of soldiers were marched down, the ruffians mounted the roof, and set them at defiance, pelting them with tiles and brickbats. De Besenval was forced to send down an entire battalion with a couple of guns; but even when the troops had made good their entrance into the house, the plunderers barricaded the staircases and passages, and defended every room. The soldiers could only clear them by a resolute fire both on those within and those on the roof, and it was not till four or five hundred had been killed that the riot, to which the citizens were already giving the name of insurrection,* was quelled. Many, too, perished miserably in the cellars, where they had drunk up a barrel of a liquor which they mistook for wine, but which was in fact a poisonous acid which Reveillon used in his trade. A judicial inquiry into the cause of the tumult was set on foot by the Parliament, but was presently suppressed by the Government, which was unwilling to provoke D'Orleans further by giving publicity to his malpractices, and did not as yet suspect the extent of his machinations. To an English reader the most remarkable circumstance connected with the transac-

* They called it the insurrection du Faubourg St. Antoine. — See "Mémoires du Baron de Besenval," iii. 386, and Dr. Moore's "View of the French Rev.," i. 140. Of the money found in the rioters' pockets the baron says: "Je la jugeai devoir partir de l'Angleterre, n'osant alors soupçonner tout à fait M. le Duc d'Orléans." He afterwards learnt that he would have done the duke no injustice.

tion is that among the Royalist nobles the prejudice against England was so strong that a suspicion was general that the rioters had been in Pitt's pay. They afterwards owned their error; but two years of ever-increasing misery were needed to show them to what Government and what nation they were to look for the most judicious friendship, the most cordial sympathy, the most lavish succour and support.

Different towns, Tours, Blois, Cambrai, Compiègne, had been proposed as the place of meeting for the States; but Versailles had been finally fixed upon by the king himself, chiefly, it is said, from the superior facilities for hunting which it afforded.* In that town accordingly, on the 4th of May, the States-General assembled, and, as a preliminary to their deliberations, heard mass together in the church of St. Louis, the royal family going to the church in state at their head; and, as the queen's coach passed through the streets, mobs, consisting chiefly of women, raised shouts in honour of the Duke d'Orleans with so bitter a tone and so evident an animosity towards the queen herself, that she nearly fainted from terror.† From a window which commanded a view of the procession two ladies were gazing on it with very different feelings. Madame de Montmorin, the wife of the secretary of State, and Madame de Staël, wife of the Swedish ambassador and daughter of Necker himself, who had called the Assembly into being. The latter gazed upon it with eager and sanguine interest. The objects of her chief admiration were the representatives of the commons, robed indeed plainly in long

* "Se levant alors, 'Non,' dit le roi, 'ce ne peut être qu'à Versailles, à cause des chasses.'"—Louis Blanc, ii. p. 212, quoting Barante's St. Priest.

† Madame de Campan, c. xiii.

undecorated black cloaks, but by their fixed, resolute looks showing their deep sense of the importance of the cause which had brought them together. It seemed to her rigorous virtue, with which perhaps some Calvinistic distrust of a Popish priesthood was unavoidably mingled, that the representatives of the clergy had lost something of the respect due to their order by the profligate lives of some of the great prelates, who, living chiefly about the court, were the best known to the people of Versailles and Paris; and that the representatives of the nobility, of whom more came from the nobles of the second class than from those of the old historic families, wore their plumes and swords like men unused to such decorations, and in a way calculated not only to excite ridicule, but to prompt the dangerous question, why men like them, who had bought the offices to which they owed their rank, should be possessors of invidious privileges and exemptions which could only be maintained to the injury of their countrymen. But no alloy of fear, or even doubt, dashed the confident joy with which she gazed on the whole scene and anticipated its results. Her companion beheld the scene with very different feelings, warning her young companion that her joy was most mistaken, and that that day would be the beginning of great evils to France and to both of them. She was indeed an over-true prophetess. Madame de Staël has recorded that she herself perished on the scaffold with one son, that another son drowned himself, her husband was massacred, her eldest daughter perished in prison, her youngest died broken-hearted at the miseries of her family. Madame de Staël herself was spared such a flood of calamities, but she too saw her father lose all the

popularity to the love of which he had sacrificed his better judgment. She saw him deprived of his official power and forced to flee to save his life, while she herself was for some time in the most imminent danger of the scaffold, and was finally banished from France. She speaks of Madame de Montmorin's warning as a strange presentiment ;* yet she herself might well have entertained a similar feeling if she had given due attention to the fact which she mentions, that among the whole six hundred representatives of the Third Estate there was but one who had as yet made himself any sort of reputation,† and he had no right to be there.‡

The Count de Mirabeau was the eldest son of a Provençal noble of Italian origin, great wealth, and a ferocious eccentricity of character, which made him the worst possible instructor for a youth of brilliant talents, unbridled passions, and a vehemence of disposition which would have severely tasked the most judicious patience to regulate or restrain. As it was, his early years were passed in a career of unsurpassed licentiousness, and severity of punishment for one in his rank of life equally unprecedented. Though unusually ugly (he himself compared his face to that of a tiger who had had the small-pox), he was irresistible with women. At first he was placed in the army; he seduced his colonel's mistress, fought duels with his brother officers, and was committed to

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* See her whole account, which is too long for transcription.—"Consid. sur la Rév. Fr.," i. 184–7.

† "Aucun nom propre excepté le sien (du Count de Mirabeau) n'etait encore célèbre dans les six cents députés du Tiers."—Ibid.

‡ The Abbé Sièyes was also a representative of the Tiers État, the only ecclesiastic who was; but he was returned by the Parisians, and their elections were not completed till some days after the first meeting of the States-General.—Dumont, "Souvenirs sur Mirabeau," p. 29.

prison at the request of his own father. Being presently released, he served a campaign in Corsica; and, having involved himself in debt, he outrivalled all other suitors for the hand of Mademoiselle de Marignan, a wealthy heiress in the Limousin. He made her much such a husband as might have been expected, seduced more women, fought more duels, and at his father's desire was again imprisoned: first in the Château d'If; and when it was discovered that he had prevailed on the wife of one of the officers of the castle to aid and share his escape, in the Castle of Roux, on the frontier of Switzerland. Here he won the goodwill of the governor of the fortress, the Count de St. Mauris, and repaid it by running away with a lady whom he met at his table, the Marchioness de Monnier. Once more he was imprisoned at Dijon; but he escaped into Holland, and there supported himself and Madame de Monnier by his pen. The pair were prosecuted by the marquis, after a time kidnapped by agents employed by him and Mirabeau's father, and both thrown into prison, Mirabeau at Vincennes, Madame de Monnier in Paris, from which she was afterwards removed to a convent at Gien. Eventually she killed herself with charcoal. At the end of three years he was released; and having persuaded a young lady of exquisite beauty to leave her convent for his sake, he quitted the kingdom with her, flying first to Prussia, where Frederick the Great, equally glad to receive him as a Frenchman, a profligate, and a genius, took him for a while into high favour. Like every one else, he was greatly struck with the king's character; but it is remarkable that the effect that it seems to have produced upon him was a decided preference of peace for war. While at his court he began to apply himself to political studies, and drew

up a paper on the situation of Europe and France in particular, which he forwarded to Vergennes and Calonne, who at that time were in power, in which he suggested a commercial treaty with England as "a sublime resolution which would insure the peace of the world,"* ignorant apparently that such a treaty was already being negotiated. But Frederick was never liberal of money, and, as Mirabeau was penniless, his debts soon forced him to leave Berlin. For a year or two he roamed about, visiting Switzerland, Holland, and England, as he was successively driven from each by his creditors; till the beginning of 1789, when, hearing of the approaching meeting of the States-General, he resolved to run all risk and return to Provence to offer himself as a candidate. He wished to be returned by the nobles as their representative. But they were unwilling to favour the ambition of one who had earned so evil a notoriety; and having, in defiance of the king's edict which made every one eligible as a candidate, established a rule of their own by which no one who was not possessed of a fief could be returned by them, they rejected him. Full of indignation, he turned to the Third Estate, and sought their votes to send him to that assembly which an intuitive consciousness of his peculiar talent pointed out to him as the true theatre of his genius. His speeches during his canvass, in which he avowed himself an opponent of Necker, gave the first token of that commanding and fiery eloquence which a few months afterwards caused the destinies of the whole country, and of every class in it, to depend upon his voice. On the people of the

* Extracts from this paper are given in the "Mémoires sur la Vie et les Écrits de Mirabeau," liv. iv.

provinces, who had never before been addressed in the language of independence, it had an electric effect. And wherever the fame of his oratory reached, his popularity became irresistible. His reception at Aix resembled that of a sovereign returning from victory. The commons, whom he aspired to represent, poured forth from the gates to escort him into the town, while a train of horsemen and carriages a mile long proved that the enthusiasm was not confined to the lower classes. The road was strewed with flowers; and it was amid the roar of a hundred guns and the acclamations of the whole city, which drowned even their thunder, that the rejected of the nobles entered the capital of Provence.* So great did he feel his influence to be over the whole province, that a few days afterwards he ventured even to risk his popularity by aiding in the suppression of a riot at Marseilles, which the garrison, without his assistance, was unable to quell. He was returned the next day, the 5th of May, unanimously, as the representative of the Third Estate, both by Aix and Marseilles, and prepared to avenge on the nobles, the body to which he of right belonged, the affront which had driven him against his will to seek the suffrages of the order with which he had hardly a feeling in common. For in the whole Assembly there was no man less a democrat in his heart, no man prouder of his own birth and ancestry; and though it is not easy to blame the Provençal nobles, who declined to choose for their representative the most notorious profligate in the kingdom, it is far from impossible that the whole course of subsequent events, the whole future of France and of continental Europe, would

* "Mémoires sur Mirabeau," vol. iii. p. 191–4.

have been widely different from what it was, had it been for Mirabeau's interest as a deputy of the nobles to repel the encroachments of the representatives of the commons, instead of prompting and urging them on with his unrivalled eloquence and energy as their mouthpiece and leader; far from improbable that the subsequent fate of the world for many years depended on the question which body Mirabeau should represent in the States-General.

The States were formally opened by the king in person. The place of meeting was a spacious hall in the town of Versailles, the same which two years before had been used for the Notables. It had been the scene of many a magnificent entertainment in times past, but had never beheld so imposing or momentous a ceremony. The town itself had not risen into celebrity till the memory of the preceding States-General had almost passed away. And now, after all the deputies had ranged themselves to receive their sovereign; the representatives of the clergy at the right hand of the throne; the nobles on the left; the commons in denser mass at the bottom of the vast apartment; as the king, accompanied by the queen leading her two children by the hand, and attended by all the princes of the blood, the dukes and peers of the kingdom, his ministers, and the great officers of State, entered and took his seat on the throne, the most unimpassioned must have felt that they were beholding a spectacle at once magnificent and solemn; and from long desuetude as novel as if it had been wholly unprecedented; such as might well inaugurate a new policy, or even a new constitution. Could those who beheld it as spectators, could those who bore a part in the solemnity have looked into futurity; could they have divined that no other hall would ever again

see the monarch surrounded with that pomp or received with that reverential homage which was now paid him as his unquestioned right; nay, that the end, of which this day was the beginning, scarcely one single person of all those now present, whether men in the flower of their strength, women in the pride of their beauty, or even children in their infantine innocence and grace, would live to behold; but that sovereigns and subjects, victims and murderers were destined, almost without exception, to perish with circumstances of unutterable, unimaginable horror and misery, as the direct consequences of this day's pageant: we may well believe that not one of those who now greeted it with eager hope and exultation would have failed to avert his eyes from the ill-omened spectacle, and to resolve to bear the worst evils of which he now trusted soon to see the abolition, rather than bring on his country the calamities which were about to fall on it. The king's speech was short. He delivered it with unusual dignity and grace,* having often rehearsed it to the queen; it was well received, and interrupted with frequent acclamations: 'though those who watched all that passed with the greatest anxiety remarked that one or two compliments to the queen which it contained, met with no such response; while at its close the commons gave an indication of their feeling towards the representatives of the other orders, and provoked a display of theirs toward them, which was fraught with still greater danger. Many among them had not concealed their disapproval of the regulation which prescribed for them a far plainer dress than that of the clergy or the nobles; and now when on

* Madame de Campan, c. xiii. Dr. Moore, i. 144.

the king resuming his seat he replaced his hat, and the nobles, according to ancient etiquette, covered themselves in like manner, some of the commons asserted their equality with them by putting on their hats also. Such an assumption was a breach of all established custom. The nobles were more indignant than the king himself, and with angry shouts demanded the removal of the hats. They were met with louder clamour; and in a moment the whole hall was in an uproar, which was only allayed by the presence of mind of Louis himself, who, as if oppressed by the heat, laid aside his own hat, when, as a matter of course, the nobles and all the other deputies followed his example, and peace was restored.

M. Barentin, who had succeeded Lamoignon as keeper of the seals, next delivered a short speech, to which no one listened; though it was not wholly insignificant, since one sentence, which expressed an opinion in favour of voting by head rather than by order, showed a sad inability to appreciate the objects of the extreme reformers, and the nature of the task which lay before the Government. And then by the express order of Louis, Necker addressed the assembly in an oration, or rather lecture, which lasted for several hours, and produced as much disappointment as weariness. When he first rose he was listened to with eagerness, all expecting that he was about to give an outline of the constitutional reforms which the Government proposed to effect, and of the extent to which it was prepared to acquiesce in the demands contained in the different cahiers, the general purport of which was no secret. But instead, he dilated on nothing but the condition of the finances, which in the eyes of his hearers was at that moment a subject of quite secondary importance; and on his own

achievements since his restoration to office in restoring order to them and reviving public credit, which they still less cared to hear extolled. Of the question on which the hearts of every representative of the commons was set above all others, in how many chambers they were to meet, he said not a word; and the only mention of the States-General which he did make, was so ill contrived as to be offensive. The meeting had been promised, he said, an account of the embarrassment of the finances; and now, since he had rectified that, there was no longer any absolute necessity for their assembling. They had only been called together in discharge of the royal promise, that thus the king might establish a better harmony between the different parts of the constitution.

The speech had been so long that Necker had been unable to deliver it all himself, but had employed a clerk to read the greater portion of it:* and had there been no other proof of his unfitness for his situation it alone would have been sufficient; for it showed him to be completely ignorant of what was notorious to every other man in the kingdom, the importance which the deputies attached to the number of the chambers in which they were to sit; a question which at the moment absorbed every other in the mind of every one, to whichever party they belonged; ignorant too of the intensity of the resolution which the representatives of the Third Estate had formed to have their own way in the matter. Of all the mistakes he made not one was so grave, not one had so all-powerful an influence on the subsequent course of events, as his omitting to regulate this point himself, by the king's authority. However disap-

* Lord Auckland's Memoirs, ii. 322.

pointed the representatives of the commons might have been at any decision unfavorable to their views, they would not have ventured to begin with a disobedience to a positive ordinance which the king had confessedly the right to issue; and when once the division of chambers had taken place they would have found it almost impossible to change the arrangement. As it was they were left to battle out the question with the other two orders, and the strife could not long be doubtful; for the Third Estate were an united party with one object, seeing their way to it clearly, and able, with very few exceptions, to rely on each other. Of the nobles and clergy many already inclined to their view on the point at issue; many more were sure to adopt it if they saw it likely to prevail: while, even of the remainder who entertained well-considered objections to it, and who had formed a definite and clear judgment in favour of a division of the chambers, many in their conduct partook of the indecision of the minister, and were unable to form any settled plan of resistance to a measure to which they saw it would be ruinous to consent. Different acts and events have had the sad pre-eminence assigned to them of being the beginning of the Revolution. The Duke de Liancourt saw it in the taking of the Bastille. Madame de Staël pronounces that the vote by which the Third Estate declared itself the National Assembly* was not only the commencement but the completion of the Revolution. But in truth it was begun before. It was begun on the day when Necker as minister of the king issued the edict doubling the numbers of the commons, and leaving the mode of deliberation and

* "Ce décret était la Révolution elle-même."—"Considérations," &c., 204.

voting undetermined; and therefore in the power of the commons to decide. All the subsequent evils flowed from the arrogation of the whole power of the State by the commons; and this had been rendered certain and inevitable by what the minister ordained and by what he omitted. It would be pressing too severely on the memory of a virtuous and upright man to charge him with the atrocities which stained the Revolution, which, as there was no precedent for them in all the annals of crime and cruelty, neither he nor any one could anticipate: but for the utter failure of the Revolution to bestow political liberty on the French people, so unfortunate for themselves, and even for the rest of the world; for the disappointment of the hopes entertained by all the best and wisest of their own country, and of the enlightened friends of freedom among other nations, he is directly accountable, for it was the direct consequence of his own conduct: and history charges no statesman of any country with a heavier error, nor with any more gratuitously committed.

On the sixth the contest began. After Necker's speech on the fifth the members had been dismissed for the day, and enjoined to verify their writs of return with all possible expedition that they might proceed to business without any unnecessary delay. Accordingly on the morrow they assembled, the nobles and clergy in two chambers appropriated for their use, the Third Estate in the large hall as the only apartment big enough to contain their numbers. The names of those who took the lead among them on this occasion are unknown; but they were shrewd men, aware of the advantage often gained in such conflicts by the assumption that a right is notorious or a claim incontestable. They saw too that though verifying their returns together was a wholly different thing

from discussing constitutional questions together, yet the battle would be more than half won if for any purpose whatever they could surprise the other two orders into meeting them in one apartment; and it favoured their pretensions that they themselves were occupying the same hall in which they had all been assembled on the preceding day. Accordingly they professed to take it for granted that the verification was to be proceeded with by all the orders in one body, as they had met to hear the king's speech the day before; and, moreover, that it was to be carried on in their chamber, so that the higher orders might seem to be associated with them, not they with the higher orders: and they presently sent a message to them stating that they were waiting for their arrival to begin the verification, and requesting that they would join them without delay.

Whether the nobles and clergy saw the snare may be uncertain, but they were too proud of their superior rank to obey such a summons; and, as the commons insisted on waiting to be joined by them before they would begin to examine their own returns, days and weeks were wasted in discussions in which neither side would yield; while the king, whose authority to settle the dispute by his command would have been recognised by both, was restrained from acting by his own want of statesmanship or energy, and the perverse indecision of his minister. Three plans were ventilated: the first was that sanctioned by all former precedent, and for which the higher orders now contended, that each should hold its debates in a separate chamber, and that the vote of the majority should be the decision of the entire order. The second was that on which the Third Estate insisted, that all should sit together, and should

vote, not as it was called "by order," but "by head," in which case the superiority of numbers would enable them to carry every point. The third had something of the appearance of a compromise between the other two. Its advocates proposed that the two higher orders should be united in one chamber, which should in a great degree resemble the British House of Peers, while the Third Estate sitting by itself would correspond to the House of Commons. Necker himself inclined to this scheme, and nothing but his extreme mismanagement could have prevented its adoption; for though it was not popular with the majority of either order, it had earnest and able advocates in each. Among the nobles the Marquis de Montesquieu moved a formal resolution in its favour; M. de la Luzerne, Bishop of Langrès, was equally eager in his advocacy of it, though he would have preferred some alteration in its details, and in a pamphlet which he published just before the meeting of the States-General proposed a division of the representatives of his own profession, by which those taken from the superior ranks of the clergy would be united to the nobles, those who belonged to the lower class to the Third Estate. What was far more important was the fact that a considerable party among the representatives of the commons was either openly or secretly in favour of the same division. M. Mounier, whose abilities and influence in Dauphiny had been fully displayed in De Brienne's time, and who, as one of the representatives of the Third Estate sent by that province, had few superiors in that order, had written an elaborate treatise in recommendation of it, as leading to the institution of a parliament on the British model. M. Malouet, who had filled several official posts with high credit, and

was now one of the representatives of the commons for Riom, a man with whom the only fault that Madame de Staël could find was something akin to that which she confesses in her own father, that he was too convinced of the supremacy of truth to take always the necessary pains to impress its value on others, openly expressed the same opinions. Above all there was ample reason to believe that Mirabeau himself, who made no secret of his admiration of parts of the English constitution, though an avowed rival of Mounier's, was secretly in favour of such an arrangement, or at all events might easily be won over to countenance and advocate it.

In one of the discussions a deputy whose face was unknown to the generality of his colleagues made a short but vehement speech on the other side; replying to a message from the clergy with an angry denunciation of them as a body who, though bound by their profession to a particular solicitude for the welfare of the poor, were yet preventing the States from devising measures for the relief of the existing distress by their refusal to join the commons in the assembly: and he bade them abandon not only their pretensions to exclusiveness, but also their wealth and luxury, and return to the modesty of the earlier ministers of religion. There was such energy and appropriateness in the language of the speaker that every one inquired his name. He was Maximilian Robespierre, one of the deputies from Arras, where he had already acquired a high reputation as an advocate.* From a timidity† strangely at variance with

* Bachaumont, under date July 3, 1783.

† "Il me dit qu'il avait la timidité d'un enfant; qu'il tremblait toujours en approchant le tribune; et qu'il ne se sentait plus au moment où il commençait à parler."—"Souvenirs sur Mirabeau," p. 174.

his subsequent career, he was at first a reluctant speaker; and no one who saw his slight, weak figure, and heard his thin tremulous voice, could have suspected the ferocity which lurked in his disposition, or the resolution which would hereafter enable him to sway the Assembly with despotic power, and make the whole nation tremble at his word.

Nothing could be more obvious than that, when everything was tending to diminish the respect hitherto shown to all established authority, and to damage the royal dignity, a minister worthy of his place would vigilantly and resolutely have seized every opportunity of strengthening them. Necker had two singularly favorable opportunities of doing so. He might have coupled the division into two chambers with the duplication, when gratitude for the concession of this latter point might have been expected to induce the commons to acquiesce in the other being determined against their wishes. He might, again, have made the king command the division the moment that the dispute arose about the verification of the returns, when the royal interposition would have been attended with the dignity which almost inevitably attaches to a mediator. But unhappily he had adopted the weak and unstatesmanlike idea that the States-General should be left to decide the question themselves: even when by his duplication of the commons he had rendered it certain that in such a case the decision of the States could only be the decision of the commons. The consequence was that a month was wasted in a contest which threatened to be interminable; while the commons refused to enter on business of any kind till the other orders had joined them in their chamber; and the nobles and clergy standing, as they were

entitled to stand, upon their rights, refused to comply with the invitations which the commons were certainly not authorized to address to them. They consented to appoint commissioners to confer with those of the commons, but the conferences only left each party more resolute to maintain its own views. Indeed the desire of the commons to monopolize all the powers of the State had become so evident that some of those who had at first been the most ardent reformers now opposed their encroachments; and a resolution passed by the nobles that the mode of deliberation by order was a fundamental principle of the monarchy was moved by D'Epresménil himself. The commons replied by an address to the king, drawn by Mirabeau, in which they artfully represented themselves as in alliance with the throne to resist the pretensions of the clergy and nobles, the two branches of the aristocracy, as they termed them; and, as every day's delay not only showed the weakness of the Government, but gave the commons time to tamper with or overawe sections of the other orders, there was evident danger lest they should proceed to take the matter wholly into their own hands as absolute masters of the situation. Necker became alarmed; it was at all events plain that the excitement which so novel a state of things was producing among all classes was in itself most dangerous.* He felt the necessity of making an effort to terminate it; but his first suggestions only evaded the question really in dispute instead of deciding it, and in the second week in June the leaders of the commons thought the time was come for bolder measures.

The attention of the king himself was for a

* "Tous les germes de désordres ont été semés et ont pris racine dans cet intervalle."—"Souvenirs sur Mirabeau," p. 31.

moment drawn off from public business by the death of the dauphin,* who, from having been a handsome, active boy of unusual promise, had at the beginning of the year fallen into bad health, and died on the 4th of June. His death was a source of bitter grief to his parents at the time; but the day was not far distant when they had cause to wish that they had laid his brother with him in the same grave. As it was, they had but little leisure for lamentation. The very day of his death, the king was compelled to receive a deputation from the Third Estate, who almost forced their way into the royal presence.† The next week, the commons began a series of active usurpations of the whole authority of the estate, the Abbé Sièyes being on this occasion the spokesman of the more violent party. Among the crowd of speculative politicians who had deluged Paris with pamphlets at the beginning of the year, he had been by far the most distinguished; and one of his essays, entitled "Qu'est-ce que le Tiers Etat?" which began by answering, that hitherto it had been nothing, that henceforth it was to be everything, had produced so great an impression, that the Parisian commons, who had resolved that no one belonging to the higher orders should be eligible as their representative, made an exception in his favour, and returned him. Of all the wild, impractical speculators who were now combining their theories to turn the world upside down, he was the most visionary, inconsistent, and conceited. He affirmed that he himself had mastered the whole science of politics,‡ of which he was hardly

* Madame de Campan, xiii.

† Dr. Moore's "View of the French Revolution," i. 185.

‡ Dumont relates that he said to Talleyrand himself, "La politique est une science que je crois avoir achevé," and presently adds that, though

willing to allow any one else the slightest comprehension. Yet he had no settled notion on the subject, except that the existing state of government and of society in every country was radically wrong; though with respect to other nations he gave himself but little trouble to understand the nature of the institutions he condemned. He now made an elaborate attack on the nobles and clergy for not having complied with the demands of the commons; and, declaring that the assembly could no longer continue inactive, proposed that if the other orders persisted in keeping themselves distinct, the Third Estate should act without them. The step proposed was so audacious and open an avowal of an intention to usurp the whole power of the State, that in an assembly of nearly five hundred members it was only carried by a majority of one; but it was carried, and presently the chairman of the commons took upon himself to call over the roll of the whole three orders together, as if he had a right to compel the attendance of all equally.

The nobles paid no regard to an act for which insolence is not too strong a term. But on the clergy it was not without effect. In one of the preceding discussions, a member of their body, named Target, had adjured his brethren in the name of the God of peace to unite with the commons. And the next day, when the calling of the roll was repeated, three of the inferior clergy, all from Poitou, deserted their own order, presented themselves to answer to their names, and to solicit seats among the representatives

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of the English system he professed to approve of nothing but the trial by jury, he entirely misunderstood the principles of that. His reading, according to the same authority, was very little, and was almost limited to Rousseau's "Contrat Social," Smith's "Wealth of Nations," and the writings of Condillac.—"Souvenirs sur Mirabeau," 45-7.

of the Third Estate. They were received with acclamations; the day after, the 14th of June, six more priests followed the example; and it became known that a very considerable number of those who remained were prepared to imitate it. The accession of such a body of converts was an encouragement to complete the usurpation of power which had led to it. Sièyes now proposed that the Third Estate, with the addition of those representatives of the clergy who had joined it, should without further delay declare themselves the representatives of the whole nation, and as such empowered to act and legislate for the whole. He met with an opponent, whose hostility he had little expected. Mirabeau was not an honest or an incorruptible man; but he was a statesman, with a keener and a truer insight into the measures which the necessities of the country required, and into the means by which they might be baffled, or by which alone they could be accomplished, than was possessed by any of his contemporaries. His object was the establishment of a constitutional monarchy: under the reigning sovereign if possible; if, through the prejudices of Louis himself, or the folly of his minister, the maintenance of the existing dynasty should prove incompatible with the reforms on which he was prepared to insist at any cost, he would have thought it neither wrong nor inexpedient to transfer the sceptre to the Duke d'Orleans, with whom he had entered into closer connexion than with any of the other princes or nobles. But he saw that the Third Estate by going too far might ruin everything; and under this conviction he had a few days before availed himself of the interposition of M. Malouet, a common friend, to make overtures to Necker. It was at some sacrifice of personal feeling that he did

so, for he had a personal disappointment which he had received at the minister's hand to complain of. On the first meeting of the States-General he had commenced the publication of a journal giving an account of their daily proceedings, which, though written in a light spirit, and treating the popular leaders with quite as little respect as the ministers,* was viewed with such displeasure by the Government that it was suppressed by authority. It did not silence him, for he continued it under a fresh title, calling the daily number a "Letter to his Constituents;" and it seemed impossible to find any plea on which a deputy could be forbidden to give them an account of his conduct: but he looked on the edict of suppression, though the journal, like the letters afterwards, was anonymous, as an injury, or at least an insult.

Feeling himself, however, strong enough to pass over all such considerations, he had sent a message to Necker that, if the Government would communicate its plan of action to him, and he should consider it reasonable, he should gladly support it. And in this spirit he now denounced Sièyes' proposal with great weight of argument, tempered by a judicious appreciation of the position of the assembly, and of the bounds within which it might be practicable to restrain them. He admitted that the time had come for the representatives of the Third Estate to constitute themselves an acting body, and limited his efforts to an endeavour to prevent them from assuming a title which would involve or lead to the assumption of an authority too great to be safely entrusted to any single body, as to any single individual. Sièyes had proposed that they should call

* "C'était une espèce de caricature de l'assemblée . . . . en un mot, c'était un recueil d'épigrammes."—"Souvenirs sur Mirabeau," p. 34.

themselves "The Assembly of the Representatives of the French Nation." It was easy to show that they were not so, but only the representatives of a portion of it; and Mirabeau, who was as proud of his ancestry as any deputy of the nobility, had no inclination to let their claim as representatives of another portion be smothered. He was aware, too, though probably no one else in the assembly saw the inseparable connexion of the throne and the aristocracy, that in contending for the maintenance of the rights of the nobles, he was also contending for the safety of the crown. And it is to the honour of his acuteness, as well as of his courage, that he did not hesitate to found some of his most energetic arguments on the right which the king would have to refuse his sanction to the assumption of such a title, and of its absolute invalidity without his consent.* He affirmed that not one member had been furnished with instructions enjoining such a step; and ended by predicting that if they, the representatives of one order, ventured to engross the authority which the constitution under which they were assembled had vested in three, such conduct must inevitably lead to civil war, to the unchaining of every evil passion, to plunder, to massacre, and to a hideous anarchy which never fails to end in despotism. He concluded a long speech by recommending the title of "Representatives of the French People;" one which, however, to an English eye is open to at least as grave an objection as that of Sièyes which he condemned; since it would have implied that the nobles and clergy formed no part of the people, and consequently had or might have in-

* Extracts from the speech are given in Mirabeau's "Memoirs," iii. 277, and in Alison from the "Histoire Parlementaire."

terests different from or adverse to the interests of the people. Mounier, who was equally opposed to Sièyes, advanced a better suggestion when he proposed that they should call themselves the "Representatives of the Commons."* But both Mounier and Mirabeau presently repented of their opposition, when, after Sièyes had defended his proposition by arithmetical calculations, arguing that the deputies of the nobles and clergy put together did not represent above 150,000 persons, while those of the Third Estate represented 25,000,000, a deputy in the crowd, named Le Grand, shouted out a proposal that they should call themselves the "National Assembly." Such a title involved a far more complete assumption of the entire authority of the State than any other that had been proposed. If assumed by the commons alone, it amounted to a negation of the right of either clergy, nobles, or even the king, to be considered a part of the nation; but, though it was hotly contested in a debate which lasted two days, its very arrogance was attractive to a large majority, and its adoption was carried, with an additional resolution declaring that they alone represented the general will of the nation, and that there neither was nor could be any power between them and the throne.

Mirabeau had absented himself from the division when he saw that he should be left in the minority; but the prediction on which he had ventured, that the adoption of too wide a title might lead to civil war, was not a mere flower of oratory, but his settled con-

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* Dumont, however, attributes the first use of the term "commons" to Sièyes. "C'était lui qui avait fait quitter le nom de Tiers État pour adopter celui des Députés des Communes."—"Souvénirs," &c., p. 47.

viction;* and he became more anxious than ever to attach himself to the side of the crown. He obtained the interview with Necker that he desired; but once more Necker threw away his opportunity. It is possible that the defeat which Mirabeau had just sustained in the assembly, misled him as to the extent of his general influence. But, whatever may have been his motive or his feeling, he treated Mirabeau's arguments to his face as unimportant, and avowed to him a difference of general views that must prevent their acting in unison. Mirabeau, he said, wished to govern by policy; he himself by morality. He was paying morality but a bad compliment when he represented it as the opposite of policy. Mirabeau was keenly disappointed. He had not been wholly disinterested in his offers of service to Necker. As his profligacy had made him needy, he wanted money; as it had lowered both his character and his influence, he was still more desirous to attain a situation where he could display the capacity of which he was conscious to its full extent, and make himself the undisputed bulwark of a great party. Both objects would have been served if he could have formed a connexion with the king's government, and by his weight among the Third Estate have extricated it from its difficulties. Jealousy of his abilities, and still more of his popularity, had probably as great a share as his own vaunted probity and morality in leading Necker to reject his proffered assistance. And after such a repulse Mirabeau saw no other resource than to connect himself more closely than ever with the party of the Duke d'Orleans, who knew his value, and was

* "Quelle pitié," me dit Mirabeau; "ils s'imaginent donc que tout est fini; mais je ne serais pas surpris si la guerre civile était le fruit de leur beau décision."—"Souvénirs," &c., p. 60.

willing to accede to his terms. Nor did a week elapse before he had an opportunity of showing his courage and his influence in support of the views of his new patron.

Such a step as the Third Estate had now taken could not be acquiesced in or left unnoticed by the king without a total abdication of his authority; and the serious and pressing nature of the emergency for a moment not only roused Necker to energy, but awakened in him a larger comprehension than he had hitherto displayed of the general posture of affairs, and of such measures of conciliation and concession as might strengthen the moderate party.* For it was surmised with truth that many of the Third Estate had been dragged in to vote for the resolutions just passed who had been far from approving them in their hearts. But when things looked most promising, they were marred, partly by his own want of courage, and partly by the unhappy interference of some other adviser, who, with too much reason, is believed to have been the queen herself.

The first thing to be done was clearly to wrest the initiative from the Third Estate, who had neither law nor constitutional principle to warrant their encroachments, and to replace it in the hands of the king; and with this view Necker proposed that on the 23rd of June, six days after the recent vote of the commons, the king should hold a Royal Sitting, at which he should annul that vote, and at the same time announce a series of measures, chiefly in the way of

* According to Dumont the plan which was proposed, and to a certain extent adopted, was not Necker's own, but had been suggested by M. Duroverai to Malouet, and by him to Necker. It will be seen, however, that this statement is irreconcileable with that of Madame de Staël, which will be presently mentioned, that Necker had proposed to hold such a sitting in May.

concession to demands which had been made at one time or another, and which comprised nearly every stipulation which could fairly be considered indispensable to liberty. Many of the intended announcements were judicious; all were liberal in the extreme. But the weakest part of them was that which bore on the point which the commons had made the cardinal question of all, the division of the chambers. On this point the minister's plan showed a double weakness: the weakness of attempting to compromise with demands of which no jot could be conceded with safety; and the weakness, if possible still worse than the other, of proposing a compromise which could never work, but would only afford ground for ceaseless wrangling. Necker recommended that the king should draw a distinction between the subjects of deliberation which would come off before the States, and should enjoin them to meet in one hall to settle those which affected the whole nation, and especially all matters of taxation; at the same time commanding that matters of a less common interest, and such as concerned its own affairs and privileges should be discussed separately by each order in its own chamber.†

* Madame de Staël points out as a proof of the liberality and also of the sufficiency of the concessions suggested by her father to the king that "La déclaration, telle que l'avait rédigée M. Necker, était presque mot pour mot semblable à celle qui fut donnée par Louis XVIII. à St. Ouen le 2 Mai, 1814, vingt-cinq années après l'ouverture des États-Généraux."—"Considérations," &c., p. 215. Lacretelle, too, admits the resemblance of Necker's plan to the constitution of 1814, speaking of it as "qui offre assez d'analogie à celle qui ait fixé nos destinées, nos libertés, notre répos après vingt-cinq aus de malheur."—vii. 36.

† The recommendation is expressed in slightly different terms by different historians. The statement in the text is that given by Madame de Staël herself, of course as what she conceives most favorable to her father's judgment. Her words are: "Et ce n'était que sur les intérêts, sur les affaires, et les privilèges de chaque ordre qu'ils étaient appélés à delibérer separément."—"Consid. sur la Rév. Fr.," i. 215. Lacretelle's description is: "Cette délibération se ferait en commun pour les objets de finance et d'admi-

It would seem that he could not perceive that the majority of these matters also were resolvable into questions of finance; and that there was nothing, not even the taxation, which the soundest statesmen more saw the necessity of reforming altogether than the different privileges (apart from that of exemption from taxation) claimed and exercised by the higher orders. Nor could he see that, even supposing all other subjects of strife to be disposed of by this expedient, it was at the same time opening the door to a fresh dispute more interminable than any, on the point which were subjects of common interest to be debated by the three orders together, and which were to be taken by each separately as chiefly affecting their own order. Indeed, while even proposing this arrangement Necker himself condemned it; for in his scheme it was to be but a temporary expedient till the constitution should be settled on a permanent footing; it being understood that the most essential portion of that constitution was to be the establishment of a legislative body in two chambers. And it is too plain to require argument that if such a divi-

nistration; elle se ferait par chambre pour les lois constitutionelles." It must be added that Madame de Staël affirms that her father proposed this royal sitting a month earlier; "un mois plus tôt que le 23 juin, c'est-a-dire longtems avant que le tiers état se fut declaré Assemblée Nationale; avant le serment du jeu de paume; enfin avant que les députés eussent pris aucune mésure hostile." And she argues that then, while the commons were uncertain whether any of the nobles or clergy would join them, and whether they would be able to carry their point of voting by head and in one chamber at all, they would gladly have accepted such a compromise as that proposed. And she attributes the delay that, according to her, took place, to the king himself; who "se tranquillisait sur la popularité de son ministre, croyant qu'il serait toujours tems d'y avoir recours s'il le fallait." It is remarkable, however, that, though on the 23rd of June, when Necker found his propositions were to be modified he very properly resolved to resign his post rather than bear the responsibility of measures which he was not allowed to direct, he does not appear to have done so in May: so that he must be taken to have acquiesced willingly in the delay preferred by the king.

sion was desirable after all the most important subjects of dispute had been removed, it must be infinitely more so while they were causing daily discussion and agitation.

On this point, then, his ideas were unstatesmanlike and certain to fail; and, as if his happier conceptions were always to be marred by some strange fatality, a piece of apparently trifling neglect led to an event which threw a fresh obstacle in the way of the acceptance of the concessions which were to be announced at the same time. As the Royal Sitting was to be held in the same great hall which since the opening of the States had been appropriated to the commons, it was necessary to close it a day or two before, that workmen might replace the throne and the other decorations suitable to the royal dignity. Accordingly, when on the 20th the representatives of the commons repaired to it as usual, they found it closed against them, without any notice or explanation being afforded why such a step had been adopted. Presently the Royal Sitting was announced; and a report was spread that it was to be held for the dissolution of the States. As the Royal Sittings had never been used but as measures of more severe reproof and compulsion towards the Parliament than even Beds of Justice, and had more than once been the occasion of the suspension or banishment of those bodies, it was not strange that the report gained general belief. The whole body of the representatives thus excluded, those of the clergy who had gone over to the commons, as well as the commons themselves; those who had been most inclined to support the Government and to moderate the violence of the extreme party, as well as the most furious reformers, took fire in an instant. They resolved at once to transfer their sitting to some other con-

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venient spot, and, as a tennis-court capable of receiving the whole number was close at hand, they repaired thither; and Mounier himself, the most resolute and consistent advocate of such reforms as alone could be consistent with true liberty, drew up an oath which he proposed for the adoption of the assembly. So great was the excitement that even he, sober-minded and honest as he generally was, was led to exaggerate the truth, and to overstate the pretensions of the whole body of the States-General, much more of that section of them which he was addressing. The resolution, as he moved it, declared that the "National Assembly had been called together to fix the constitution of the kingdom, to effect the regeneration of public order, and to maintain the true principles of the monarchy; . . . and that, therefore, it resolved that all its members should instantly take an oath never to separate till the constitution of the kingdom and the regeneration of public order should be established on solid foundations." It was received with acclamation. M. Bailly, whom the assembly had elected as its president, was the first to take the oath; and of the whole body but one, M. Martin, one of the deputies for Castel-Naudary, had the courage to refuse it. As a still more positive assumption of the whole legislative power to themselves than even the adoption of the title of the National Assembly, it greatly diminished the chance of any useful end being served by the approaching Royal Sitting.

It certainly added both courage and strength to the extreme revolutionists: the very next day, though it was known by that time that no idea of dissolving the States had been entertained, more than half of the remaining deputies of the clergy, without waiting to hear what the king really intended, joined the assem-

bly. On the other side, the adherents of the Government had endeavoured to encourage it by a display of their own firmness; the nobles, by a great majority, voting an address to the king, in which they besought him to support their order; and which was seconded by a vigorous remonstrance presented to him by some of the higher clergy. But nothing could inspire Louis with resolution and decision: he could neither form any positive opinions himself, nor adhere steadfastly to those which he adopted from the arguments of others. When listening to Necker's arguments, which were very often founded on his fears, he thought it impossible to be too conciliatory: when under the influence of the queen and the Count d'Artois, he agreed that it best became his dignity to be peremptory. When left to himself, his one idea was to avoid all contest, or appearance of a contest, with his people; and he could not perceive that to abandon the established rights of the higher orders and his own prerogatives at the dictation of the commons was the way, not to avoid such a contest, but to render it inevitable, and at the same time to ensure defeat in it.

On the 23rd the hall was re-opened. As on the 5th of May, the three orders assembled to receive their sovereign; and with a pomp and magnificence nearly similar to that with which he had opened the States, Louis came down to announce the future policy of his Government, and the measures which had been devised to redress the evils of the State, and to remove or relieve the grievances which had bred dissatisfaction among his people. But to the retinue which attended the king to the assembly one face was wanting whose presence was, of all others, most indispensable. Necker was absent. A quarter of a century before English statesmen had complained that

there was a power behind the crown greater than the crown itself, a party with access to the royal ear, who, without the responsibility of office, were able often to overrule the counsels of those who were in office; and Necker, by his absence, was making a similar complaint now. It was afterwards learnt that a day or two before the sitting, when the Council of State was with Louis finally settling the draft of the speech which he was to deliver, he was called away, and that the deliberations were adjourned to the next day; when two other nobles, with the Counts of Provence and Artois, were admitted to take part in them, by whom Necker's advice was in some degree overruled, and the king was persuaded to modify some of the concessions which he had proposed, and some of the expressions which he had recommended, in a way which, though in most instances not very important, Necker thought likely to render the sitting less acceptable to the commons.* He threatened to resign his office, a step which, if the points on which he had

* "Considérations sur la Rév. Fr.," i. 219. Necker's complaint seems to have had but slender foundation. He represents the alterations made in his original draft as generally putting the rights of the crown on higher ground than he had proposed, and consequently as by so much less likely to be acceptable to the Third Estate; and Professor Smyth, in his admirable lectures, though *usually* far from favorable to him, adopts this view, but it does not seem sustained by the facts. There was no alteration of which Necker more complained than of that according to which, instead of *commanding* the three orders to meet together to discuss one class of measures, Louis *exhorted* the nobles and clergy to unite with the Third Estate for that purpose. But to *exhort* where the king might have *commanded* was certainly not adding to his dignity; nor could it possibly be offensive to the Third Estate to abstain from laying a command upon them. Even Madame de Staël blames her father for not attending the king at the royal sitting: "On aurait souhaité que sa présence à la séance royale fît croire aux députés du peuple qu'il approuvait la démarche adoptée par le conseil du roi." According to Dumont he was influenced in his final decision to stay away partly by a person named Riol, who, though a mere trifler and meddler, had acquired a good deal of his confidence, and partly by his wife.

been overruled appeared to him to involve any principle, he would have been amply warranted in taking. For his continuing minister, and yet by his absence on this occasion showing his disapproval of the king's policy, there could be no justification; and that Louis should permit it was another most mischievous evidence of his want alike of statesmanlike perception and kingly spirit.

It was not without dignity that Louis addressed the deputies; nor, though Necker disapproved of any allusion to the proceedings of the last week, is it easy to perceive how, if the king was to maintain a fragment of his former authority, he could abstain from condemning the assumption by the commons of the title of the National Assembly, or their subsequent denial of his power of dissolving them. He commenced, therefore, by disallowing their pretensions to the whole legislative power of the State which they had thus put forward. But, having done so, he at once proceeded to announce the concessions which from that moment he enacted, and which comprised the removal of almost every grievance of which their constituents had instructed them to complain. He abolished the "taille," the "corvées," the "capitaineries." He extinguished the exemptions from taxation which the nobles and clergy had hitherto enjoyed, as well as all those seignorial rights, the relics of the old feudal system, which, though not uniform in every province, yet, where least acted on, were a degradation of the vassal; where stringently enforced, an intolerable hardship. He ordained that for the future the States-General should be constantly reassembled at fixed intervals, and that the whole revenue, both in the taxation by which it was raised and also in its expenditure, should be regulated by

them; and he also promised the immediate establishment of provincial assemblies. He opened all those military and civil appointments which had hitherto been engrossed by the nobles to the people at large. He renounced the practice and power of issuing the arbitrary warrants known as "lettres de cachet," and he granted the liberty of the press. He had reason for the assertion with which he concluded his address, that no king had ever done so much for his people. The exhortation to the nobles and clergy to unite in one chamber with the Third Estate for the discussion of financial subjects was pronounced by the keeper of the seals; and then the king himself dismissed them, commanding them to re-assemble the next day to add what was necessary on their part to complete the reforms which he had thus inaugurated, warning them at the same time that, if they should abandon him in the enterprise he had undertaken, he by himself should work out the welfare of his people. It was injudicious to allow his last words thus to bear the stamp partly of distrust and partly of a threat. But however impolitic, they had no real influence on the conduct of the commons, and of those who had already joined them. Throughout the king's address they had preserved a sullen and disloyal silence. They could not deny the magnitude and the sufficiency of the reforms which he enumerated, but they grudged that he should have the merit of them. They wished to have extorted them from him by compulsion, and could not bear that they should flow from his own spontaneous beneficence. They even admitted that this was their feeling. "What more," said Montmorin to Bailly, "what more could the king have done? What more could you wish?" "Nothing," was the reply; "but we should have

taken it ourselves, not that he should have given it."* And in these few words lies the great cause of the failure of the Revolution: that instead of confining themselves to the removal of grievances and abuses, though that was the sole reason why the States-General had been convoked, the commons from the first directed their chief attention to procuring the transference of all political power to themselves. Accordingly, the instant that the king had quitted the hall, they repaid his condescension with insulting disobedience. The nobles and the higher clergy, in fulfilment of his injunction, retired too. But the commons remained; and when, seeing that they made no show of moving, the Marquis de Brezé, the master of the ceremonies, reminded them of the king's parting words, Mirabeau, now taking the lead in defiance of his sovereign, replied that they would not stir unless they were driven out by bayonets, while Sièyes, addressing the deputies themselves, asserted that the king's order had made no change in their position, that they were still the same men that they were yesterday. And two of the provincial lawyers, Pétion and Barnave, not yet dreaming of the frightful tyranny of which they themselves were to be first instruments and then victims, denounced the king's order to adjourn to the morrow as an outrage of the most lawless despotism. Yet so much insane violence of language had for the moment no practical effect but to show their settled enmity to the Government,

* According to De Tocqueville the feeling was of older date, and had been in existence some years at least; even before Voltaire's death, who he thinks was deceived on that point. "Les Français ne se bornèrent plus à désirer que leurs affaires fussent mieux faites: ils commençaient à vouloir les faire eux-mêmes, et il était visible que la grande révolution que tous preparait allait avoir lieu non seulement avec l'assentiment du peuple, mais par ses mains."—"L'Ancien Régime," p. 245.

whatever it might be willing to do for them. After this defiance of the king's officers, all that the commons did that night was, on the motion of Mirabeau, to pass a resolution declaring the persons of the deputies inviolable; a motion hardly worthy of his usually practical shrewdness, since no one desired, and it was plain that no one had the power, to violate them. And then they too adjourned.

In the palace the agitation that night was great. Necker, more than ever discouraged at the result of the sitting and the obstinacy of the commons, re-announced his intention of resigning; while the king and the queen, though justly offended with him, felt that they could not dispense with his services, so great was his popularity with the mob. His absence from the Royal Sitting having given rise to a report that he had quitted Versailles, a crowd surrounded the palace, uttering his name with cheers, and demanding that he should be restored to them; and when at a late hour he came out to return to his own house, and they learnt that he had agreed to retain his office, their exultation knew no bounds. Yet, in exact proportion as the disorders increased, so did his unfitness to contend with them. He had no policy but concession; no plan even of conciliation but that of owning everything, state, nation, and monarch, to be at the mercy of the Third Estate, and imploring them to use their power with moderation.* What was really wanted was a minister who could supply the firmness which the king had not; taking his stand on the concessions that had been announced as ample foundations for a liberal constitution; and who should, at the same

* "J'entendais mon père conjurer les deputés du Tiers de ne pas porter trop loin leurs pretensions. 'Vous êtes les plus forts maintenant,' disait-il, 'c'est donc à vous que convient la sagesse.'"—"Considérations," &c., i. 229.

time, have sense and tact to distinguish between the moderate and violent party among the commons. But Necker understood neither the nature of men, nor the character or views of the existing parties in the State; and since, though acceptable to the mob out of doors, he was neither liked nor respected nor feared by those who had the chief sway in the Assembly, there was hardly a greater mistake made in the whole course of these transactions than when Louis prevailed on him to continue in his post.

So entirely did every one look on his maintenance in office as evidence of an intention to surrender everything, that the next morning a body of forty-six nobles, with the Duke d'Orleans at their head, joined the Assembly. They saw that the king would yield the point, and sought to make a merit with the commons of anticipating his decision. Among them was La Fayette, and the young Count de Lameth and his brother, who, being the heads of a family which, though noble, was in extreme poverty, had been indebted to the personal kindness of the king and queen for their education. They, too, had served among the troops which had been sent to America, and the republican principles which they had imbibed in that country had so completely effaced from their minds every sentiment of gratitude or honour, that from the first meeting of the States-General they put themselves in the very front of the opposition to the Government. None of them gained in the end by this desertion of their order; and D'Orleans himself lost some of his influence with his supporters by the discovery to which it led of his want of that most essential of all qualities to a leader of revolution, courage. Years before, as an officer of D'Orvilliers' fleet, he had proved himself a coward in the engagement with

Keppel; but his conduct on that occasion had been hushed up and forgotten. But after this day no one could be ignorant of his fears, displayed under circumstances which prevented their being ascribed to momentary panic. Hitherto his intrigues against the Government had been mostly secret; but now that he was about to throw off the mask, and declare openly against the king, who was also his own near relation, the effort of resolution necessary for an act, the baseness of which he could not disguise even from himself, agitated him to such a degree, that on his way to the hall of the commons he fainted away; and, when those around him opened his dress to give him relief, they found, to their astonishment and indignation, that he had guarded against personal danger by wearing beneath his outer garment a thickly quilted waistcoat; and he presently showed that he was not better endowed with political than with personal courage; for when, a few days later, the Assembly, grateful for his accession to its ranks, proposed to appoint him Bailly's successor as its president, he shrank from the office, which was conferred on the Archbishop of Vienne, M. de Pompignan. Mirabeau had reason to say, as he did, that he had every quality of a great criminal but the boldness.

His defection and that of his followers encouraged Necker to insist more urgently than before on the king's now ordering the rest of the clergy and nobles to join the Assembly. Louis had almost consented the night before; and now wrote letters to the presidents of both orders, the Cardinal de la Rochefoucauld and the Duke de Luxemburg, to express his compliance with his minister's judgment; though his language was still rather that of entreaty than of command. Both orders sent a deputation to implore him to re-

consider his order; the nobles, with a keener sense of the importance of the crisis than was possessed by their ecclesiastical brethren, not scrupling to affirm that the cause of the crown itself was at stake, and would be imperilled by the fusion; and, in the spirit of the ancient chivalry of the nation, they declared that they were willing to perish in defence of their king, but not to desert him, nor to betray his interests by either giving or yielding to unworthy counsels. Louis could feel grateful for such loyalty; but he knew not how to profit by or to direct it. Necker had assured him, with only too much truth, that the disaffection had crept into the regiments quartered around the court and in the capital. (We have seen how an ill-judged economy had some years before disbanded those troops, whose loyalty would have been proof against all seductions.) And intelligence had reached him that Juigné, Archbishop of Paris, a prelate worthy of the best days of the Church, and who was known, during the distress of the preceding winter, to have lavished all his wealth to relieve it, had just been hooted and pelted through the streets because he had opposed the encroachments of the Assembly. Louis was terrified, not for himself (to fear of personal danger he was ever a stranger), but for others; and his answer laid down the fatal rule which he had prescribed for his own conduct, from which he never departed. "He would not," he said, "expose his faithful nobles to sustain a contest which must prove unequal. It was his duty, as it was his first wish, to save them from danger. He would not have a single man perish in his quarrel." The virtuous but weak and most unhappy monarch could not perceive that, as it is the duty of loyal subjects to die for their king, it may be equally his duty to send them to death for what may seem to

be, and in the first instance may be, his own cause, but which is also and equally the cause of virtue, the cause of order, the cause of the general welfare, the cause of the whole nation. He could not see that to resist lawless encroachment and usurpation is itself the very first of a sovereign's duties; and that the greater the danger with which such resistance is attended, the more plain is the duty. During the next three years there were many occasions when a judicious and resolute employment of force would, to all appearance, have compelled obedience, and have secured to the country the peaceful enjoyment of a liberal constitution; when it must at all events have prevented the power of the State from falling into the hands which so fearfully misused it. There is no question whatever that the utter failure of the Revolution to secure political liberty to the people, and the unutterable horrors which were endured in the struggle which ensued, were the direct results of the contrary policy. Louis, however, firm only when he was to concede or to suffer, was firm now; he reiterated his injunction in more peremptory terms, and he was obeyed.

It was not likely that such a victory would lower the pretensions of the commons; and it did not. The clergy and the nobles repaired to the hall of the Assembly, where their president announced that their arrival was in compliance with the king's order, and was at the same time a proof of their zeal for the public good. Bailly's reply was but a triumphant repetition of the claim of the Assembly to the whole legislative authority. Utterly ignoring the right of the king to initiate the desired reforms and the vast concessions by which only three days before he had in fact both commenced and completed it, he declared that "the States-General would now proceed to

occupy themselves without intermission in the great work of regeneration;" as if it were a task which belonged to them alone, and in which the king had not even a share. Fatal as this concession was, it was hardly more mischievous than another which was extorted from the king, still more against his judgment, on the same day. The mob which attended D'Orleans and his party to the hall of the Assembly had insisted on entering it with them; and when they were repulsed by the sentries in obedience to the king's regulation, which limited admission to the deputies themselves, Barnave* made a furious speech on the scandal of "refusing the nation admittance to the national hall;" and the Assembly addressed the king to cancel the rule. It was cancelled, and from this time forth the debates were attended by a disorderly crowd who interfered with the speakers; cheering some, hooting down others, and, as may well be supposed, materially influencing many of the resolutions adopted by the Assembly. Presently attendance for that purpose became a trade. Some of the most violent deputies, apparently Orleanists, hiring a regularly organized troop, and paying them daily wages to applaud or hiss in accordance with the signs which they themselves made from the body of the hall.†

* "View of the Causes and Progress of the French Revolution," by Dr. Moore, vol. i. p. 262. Dr. Moore (father of Sir John Moore) was in Paris at the time, and to his work quoted here, and a journal kept by him during a subsequent visit in 1792, we owe a more precise knowledge of many details of the Revolution than is easily obtainable from any other single source. From another English traveller, however, Arthur Young, we learn that, even before this, strangers were occasionally admitted. On the 15th he was present himself, with a numerous and disorderly audience. On the 23rd he records that none were admitted but deputies.

† "It was necessary to have about 150 persons in each of the two galleries. There were also one leader and five subalterns in each gallery; the leaders only were acquainted with the signal from the hall. . . . . The wages of the common followers were from 40 sous to 3 livres each sitting. The

The next acts of Louis were marked by still stranger vacillation and weakness than those which we have already related. He was not long in receiving further proofs that the submission which he had exacted from the two higher orders had failed to accomplish the object which he had desired. The Assembly had postponed the political business till the 3rd of July.* But this interval of political inaction only increased the excitement which prevailed around, and more especially in Paris. As the harvest had not commenced there was still a great scarcity of corn, and the streets were filled from morning till night with starving, and therefore discontented and tumultuous mobs. A few years before the Duke d'Orleans had made great alterations in his city residence, known as the Palais Royal, turning the ground-floor into a bazaar-like arcade, open to the pursuers of every avocation which could enable them to pay their rent: for, vast as was his wealth, his covetousness was as conspicuous as any other of his vices. Brothels and gambling saloons were mingled with the shops of industrious tradesmen and coffee-houses: the centre was a place of common resort for loungers and idlers of every class. The frequenters were, almost naturally, in some degree under the duke's influence, and during the day his emissaries were busy among them artfully inflaming the discontent of the hungry populace: while here and there

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subalterns were paid at the rate of 10 livres, and the leaders at that of 50." —Dr. Moore, ib., pp. 425-6. The entire expense was thus nearly 1000 francs a day—a strong proof that the paymaster was the Duke d'Orleans.

* Sir A. Alison states that, "the Assembly was adjourned to the 3rd of July." But this must be a mistake: for it was on the 1st that the debate on the propriety of receiving a deputation from the mob in Paris took place.

more open agitators raised platforms or mounted tables from which they delivered seditious harangues. Their fruit soon ripened. The news of what was to be seen and heard reached the barracks of the guards, whose loyalty had been for some time suspected, and whom their colonel, the Duke de Chatelet, had in consequence confined to their quarters; and a body of them, disregarding his orders, repaired to the Palais Royal, and openly joined the most factious of the citizens and demagogues. They were received with enthusiasm; even respectable women, infected by the political frenzy of the moment, threw their arms round their necks and kissed them,* while busy agents of the movement pressed into their hands the still more welcome rewards of crown-pieces, louis, and even bank-notes. But De Chatelet, who, though generally beloved by his men for his attention to their comforts, was a strict disciplinarian, would not tolerate such insubordination: he sent down a guard who seized eleven of the ringleaders and marched them off as prisoners to an old abbey in the faubourg of Saint Germain, now used as a prison. The populace took fire: among them were scores of ruffians ready for any desperate act; and headed by such men, a vast mob was presently formed which attacked the abbey, forced the gates, released the culprits, and, bringing them back in triumph, feasted them publicly in defiance of both military and civil authority. They even sent a deputation of the chief actors in the riot which had delivered them to Versailles to beg the Assembly to take the mutineers under its protection as the victims of patriotism. And after a long debate, in which, as might have been expected,

* Lacretelle, the historian, affirms that he saw this himself.—vii. 61.

the nobles maintained the necessity of the preservation of discipline and were overborne by the votes of the commons, the Assembly appointed a deputation of its own members to address the king, and request his clemency for the offenders. Louis was unable to refuse: though it was plain that the pardon of these mutineers was the death-warrant to military discipline. But it was even more significant of the future that while he, in his answer to the deputation, spoke of the assembly as the States-General, the report of the transaction which that body immediately published, suppressed that term;* though it was solely as the States-General that they had been convened, and though, except as the States-General, they could have no legal powers, nor even existence. So determined were they to show that they owed both, not to the law, nor to the authority of the king, but to their own will.

Louis himself, however, had not pardoned these mutineers without a feeling of humiliation. Even in his eyes the discipline of the army was a sacred thing; and some of those around him took advantage of this feeling on his part to persuade him of the necessity of replacing the troops who had thus disgraced themselves with others on whom he could rely. Couriers were hastily despatched to bring up from the frontier some German and Swiss regiments who were free from the contagion of discontent, or rather disloyalty. They came up with speed; by the end of the first week of July, thirty thousand men with a hundred guns had reached Versailles, and were placed under the command of the veteran Marshal de Broglie, who, though more than seventy years of

* See Dr. Moore's "View of the Causes and Progress of the French Revolution," i. 291.

age, gladly placed his experience and tried valour at the service of his sovereign. Yet, even while thus summoning him to his aid, Louis could not repress his incomprehensible and inconsistent weakness. While announcing to him that the citizens were almost in revolt, the troops at Paris in open mutiny, he charged him to avoid all bloodshed or violence. How he was to perform any service at all and adhere to such instructions, the agitated monarch forgot to explain. But the scruples which troubled him had no influence over those who had induced him to send for the marshal. Their intention was to persuade him to avail himself of their protection to undo what had been lately done; to dissolve the assembly; and then, having by his own authority enacted or ratified the concessions which he had announced at the royal sitting, to take up a new position as a constitutional king. It argues little for the wisdom of those who planned such a scheme, at the head of whom was the Count d'Artois, that they should have for a single moment fancied it practicable with safety to the kingdom under any monarch, and least of all under such a one as Louis; that they did not see that they were inviting civil war, and one in which from the scantiness of the force at their disposal, they must be instantly overpowered, to the certain destruction of their royal master. Yet, undoubtedly they made sure of success; and, as much in their opinion depended on their surprising their enemies, they directed their chief efforts to keep their plans secret from Necker, lest by a second resignation he should re-awaken suspicion. They could not, however, prevent them from coming to the knowledge not only of Necker, but of the Assembly itself. There were traitors everywhere, among their own and among the king's most trusted servants, who

already had shrewdness enough to see which way victory would incline, and were on the watch to secure for themselves friends and protectors among the conquerors. Through them every step taken by their masters, the tenor and result of every discussion, was made known to the leaders of the people.

Some of the deputies from Brittany, Barnave, the Lameths and others, had organized a club known at first as the Bretons, afterwards as the Jacobins, from an old convent in the Rue St. Honoré, in which it held its meetings; and these men laid bare the projects of the court party to their comrades and to the assembly, thundering loudly and not without plausibility against the insincerity of the king; while another demagogue of baser origin and still fouler infamy, Marat, began to make himself notoriety by echoing their denunciations in a journal which he called the "Friend of the People," and coupling with them the most bloodthirsty threats against the ministers and the whole body of nobles, or, as he termed them, aristocrats, an appellation which caught the fancy of his readers, and was soon seized on by those who carried out his views but too faithfully as a sufficient pretext to justify the destruction of every one to whom they chose to apply it.

Mirabeau was above acting in concert with such a wretch as Marat; with the Lameths and Barnave he had more sympathy, requiring only that they should acknowledge him for their leader; and in this character on the 8th of July he presented himself to the Assembly, complaining of the advance of De Broglie's army, and moving his colleagues to address the king with a petition for their withdrawal. His speech on this occasion has been celebrated as one of the most powerful efforts of his eloquence. One sentence,

though uttered in a different sense by the orator, was strikingly prophetic of the future course of the Revolution, when he asked whether those who had counselled the king to bring up the troops had ever "observed by what a fatal chain of circumstances the wisest heads are often drawn on beyond all the bounds of moderation; and by what a terrible impulse an intoxicated people is apt to be hurried into excesses of which the bare idea would have originally made them shudder."* He painted with great force of language the indignation of the citizens of Paris and Versailles at seeing their roads and bridges, the channels of ordinary communication, their shady walks and pleasant places of resort turned into military posts, occupied by batteries, and choked up with all the preparations of war; and, drawing an argument from the still existing scarcity, dilated almost as earnestly on the discontent with which the populace must behold the soldiers well supplied while they themselves were starving. Many deputies in their hearts approved of the presence of the troops, but had not the courage to express their sentiments. The address was carried; and that too contained sentences to which subsequent events give a peculiar interest from the testimony which in it the leaders of the commons themselves bear to the public virtues of Louis himself;† to his humanity; to his justice; to the depth and sincerity of his love for his people. They compare him to Louis IX., the greatest of all the kings of France; to Louis XII., "the father of his people;" to Henry IV., still their favourite hero. And after this allusion to the wor-

* Dr. Moore, i. 298.

† Dumont, who states that the Assembly commissioned Mirabeau to frame the address, and that he himself drew it up at Mirabeau's desire, gives it at length in his Appendix, No. I.

thiest of his ancestors, they call himself the best of kings, imputing the measures of which they complain to the bad advice of those counsellors who would lead him to abandon the plan which he himself had traced for his people's happiness. They assure him that he is the object of the love and adoration of the whole nation, and, speaking for themselves, they declare that their fidelity to him is as unchangeable as it is boundless. Yet not only did a number of the deputies who now supported this address subsequently co-operate in the murder of the king whose excellence they thus confessed; not only did Mirabeau* himself lend his countenance to the mob of frantic ruffians who in less than three months stormed his palace, and if they had had the power would have then anticipated the fouler because more deliberate crime of the Jacobins of 1793; but already there were evil spirits thirsting for his blood.† Before this very July closed, women who, in the strange upset of every principle and usage which ensued, rose to high political eminence and even power, were found to assert that if Louis and his queen were not at once murdered the people were undone; and we may see from this fact how little any acts of the king's subsequent advisers contributed to his fate, of which they were made the pretexts, when those who did not dare to refuse their

* Mirabeau's complicity in the outrages of October 5-6 is surely plain from Dumont's language, who, while he avoids expressly confessing it, says, nevertheless, "Il est bien sûr que s'il y avait eu un complot contre lui [le monarque], et si Mirabeau était un des complices, il n'aurait pu se conduire autrement."—"Souvenirs," &c., p. 127.

† See a letter of Madame Roland, dated the 26th of this very month of July, 1789, quoted by Croker ("Essays on French Revolution," p. 175), in which she declares the people are "undone if the National Assembly does not proceed seriously and regularly to the trial of two illustrious heads [the king and queen], or if some generous Decius does not risk his life to take theirs."

public testimony to his innocence and beneficence, founded their private hopes upon his destruction.

For once, however, Louis refused compliance with the demand of the agitators. Recent events had alienated him from Necker, and for the moment he had resigned himself to those who gave him bolder counsels. In reply to the deputation which presented him with the address, he affirmed that the recent tumults in Paris had made it his duty to bring up troops for the preservation of the public tranquillity; but, that if the States were alarmed at their proximity, he was willing to transfer the assembly to Noyon or to Soissons; and that he himself would remove to Compiègne, in the neighbourhood of those towns, to keep himself in constant communication with them. The answer gave great offence; the confidence which it betokened in the king's power now that he had the support of the army to resist further encroachments, even spread some alarm among the leaders of the assembly. Mirabeau professed to have received information that a resolution had been taken to arrest him, Lafayette, Sièyes, and Lameth;* Necker, on the other hand, believed that he was to be the victim; and indeed such a measure had been proposed, but had been rejected by the king, who declared that he could trust to his loyalty to obey any command which he might lay upon him. The same afternoon, the 11th of July, the fallen minister received a letter from the king, dismissing him from his employments, banishing him from France, and enjoining him at the same time to keep his departure secret. Louis had judged him correctly. He obeyed the injunction with a good faith which his daughter is justified in extolling as

* Dumont, p. 80.

exemplary.* But his dismissal from office could not be kept secret. Before nightfall the news was conveyed to Paris, where his popularity was extreme. That very night witnessed a formidable riot in which one of the city barriers was burnt by the mob; and when the list of the new ministry was announced the next morning it was not calculated to appease the discontent of the people. The Baron de Breteuil, previously steward of the household, who succeeded Necker both as controller and prime minister, had been too much connected with the police to be popular. Marshal de Broglie, who became minister at war, as commander-in-chief of the troops intended to overawe them was of all men alive the most obnoxious to the citizens; while the keeper of the seals, Barentin, a man generally disliked and despised, remained in office. Even those who were not previously the objects of the popular ill-will became so now, as owing their promotion to Necker's disgrace; and one, M. Foulon, appointed paymaster of the forces, paid, as will be seen, for his dignity with his life. But at Versailles the change produced great momentary exultation. The queen, whose principal task was to inspire her husband with resolution, felt sanguine that now, with a firmer head of the administration than Necker, it would be found practicable to induce the Assembly to accept with thankfulness the constitution which the king had promised;† and her confidence was shared by her younger brother-in-law, by De Broglie, and even to some extent by De Breteuil

* Madame de Staël, i. 235.

† See her letters *passim* in the collection of M. Feuillet de Conches, especially one to the Duchess de Polignac, dated on the evening of this day, which shows both the sincerity of her good intentions, and her apprehensions (No. 138, vol. i. p. 219): "Dieu veuille qu'enfin nous puissions

himself, though he had not coveted nor indeed very willingly accepted his appointment.*

They were soon and painfully undeceived. The next morning the whole city was evidently in violent agitation, and to prevent a recurrence of the devastations of the night before, some regiments of both horse and foot, with a small battery of artillery, entered Paris and began to patrol the streets. Their appearance was only the signal for greater tumult. They were not above six thousand men; enough to exasperate, but not to quell, nor even to intimidate. In an instant the whole population sprang to arms; decorating their hats with green cockades, the colour of Necker's livery, tens of thousands armed with whatever weapons they could lay their hands on paraded the streets, bearing aloft the busts of Necker and D'Orleans, and defying the soldiery; while the regiment of guards still confined to their barracks now broke out of their quarters in a body and fired upon some troops of dragoons with whom Prince Lambesc, the officer in command, had endeavoured to overawe them. A man afterwards known as at once one of the meanest and most ferocious of the people's tyrants, and who, like most of his fellows, became

faire le bien dont nous sommes uniquement occupés. Le moment sera affreux, mais j'ai du courage: et pourvu que les honnêtes gens nous soutiennent sans s'exposer inutilement, je crois avoir assez de force en moi pour en donner aux autres. Mais il faut plus que jamais penser que toutes les classes d'hommes, quand ils sont honnêtes, sont nos sujets également . . . . Mon Dieu, si l'on pouvait croire que c'est ma veritable pensée, peut-être on m'aimerait un peu; mais il ne faut pas penser à moi. La gloire du roi, celle de son fils, et le bonheur de cette ingrate nation, voilà tout ce que je peux, tout ce que je dois desirer." The whole collection of the queen's letters do the highest credit to her heart and courage, and very often to her sagacity.

* See also a letter of M. Simolin, the Russian Ambassador, in the same collection (No. 140, p. 221), giving an account of the composition of the new ministry, and of the riots in Paris.

himself the victim of the fury which he had stimulated, Camille Desmoulins, sprang upon a table in the court of the Palais Royal. He screamed out that the court was preparing a St. Bartholomew of patriots; that the hall of the Assembly at Versailles was undermined, and the galleries filled with gunpowder,* while batteries were erecting on Montmartre to mow down the citizens; and breaking off a branch of a tree to wear as a green cockade for himself, called the whole city to arms. His summons was obeyed with enthusiasm. Throughout the whole night flames rising up in different parts of the city bore fearful evidence to the extent of the insurrection; and though the Baron de Besenval, to whom De Broglie had given the chief command within and around the city, brought up regiments with all the rapidity he could, he feared to introduce them within the walls, being fettered by the king's positive command that his troops were to shed no man's blood. So completely did Louis's untimely scruples cramp every movement of, and bewilder the foresight of his generals, that no steps were even taken to reinforce the garrison of the Bastille, or to supply that fortress with ammunition, with which it was known to be unprovided, though Desmoulins had denounced it as the chief stronghold of the people's enemies; and though the governor had reported it wholly unable to withstand an attack unless he were furnished with increased means of defence. Daylight saw the tumult increase. The mob of rioters grew by thousands every hour. They broke open the prisons, and procured a formidable reinforcement of smugglers, felons, and murderers. They

* "The report came to the ears of the king himself, who related it to the queen."—Madame de Campan, c. xiv.

seized on the churches, rang the tocsin from sixty steeples at once; and to arm their new recruits forced the entrance of the great armoury known as the Garde Meuble, and, though a great portion of its contents were rather memorials of ancient prowess than weapons of modern use, distributed its contents among those who were as yet unarmed. The spear with which Dunois, the great Bastard of Orleans, had cleared his country of the English invaders; the sword with which the first Bourbon had crushed out civil war, were alike torn down from their resting-places. By mid-day on the 13th the mob had got possession of the Hôtel de Ville, where the municipal chest contained three millions of francs, and established in its principal hall a committee to direct the insurrection, whose first order was marked by such foresight, and such adaptation to the requirements of the moment and the honour of the people, that it remains in force to this day.

It was hardly strange that men in open insurrection against the king's authority should turn their wrath upon its conspicuous emblem, consecrated though it was by usage of immemorial antiquity, and by many a heroic achievement, the snow-white banner bearing the golden lilies. But that glorious ensign could not be laid aside till another was substituted for it; and out of the red and blue colours of the city, and the white colour of the army (the lilies were the royal part of the old ensign), was formed the tricolor flag which has since won for itself a still wider renown, and with which, under every form of government, the nation has permanently identified itself. Another ordinance of the same committee commanded the instant levy of an army of forty-eight thousand men; and till midnight, and even later, crowds of all ages were thronging to

the hall to enlist in the new force, and busily equipping themselves for greater exertions on the morrow.

A portion of the money found at the Hôtel de Ville had been expended in buying up the firearms in the different gunsmiths' shops; but as that stock was insufficient for the multitude who required weapons, a band of the rioters had gone to the Hôtel des Invalides, in the hope of frightening the governor, M. de Sombreuil, into surrendering to them the stores of muskets under his charge, amounting to above thirty thousand. Sombreuil, encouraged by the Baron de Besenval, who happened to be there at the time, did his duty, and refused the audacious demand; indeed, under apprehension of an attack like that which had succeeded on the Garde Meuble, he had already given orders to remove the locks and ramrods so as to render them useless. But the men did their work so slowly, that he suspected that they had been tampered with; being, indeed, aware that packets of seditious songs and large sums of money had, within the last few days, been introduced into the garrison.* The rioters retired for the night; but he expected them to return in the morning, and he was not deceived. At daybreak the hotel was attacked by overwhelming numbers. De Besenval, whose division was close at hand, in the Champ de Mars, could not prevail on it to act, the soldiers openly refusing to fire on the people. Sombreuil was forced to surrender, and the mob, now fully armed, thought themselves capable of achieving any enterprise. They took possession of the city gates to prevent any intelligence of their operations reaching the court; and then, with one consent, marched to attack the Bastille.

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* "Mémoires du Baron de Besenval," iii. 414.

It seemed a hopeless undertaking for a mob, however formidable in numbers, without leaders of military skill, and without cannon, to attack a great fortress, defended by nine large well-armed towers, walls of great height and solidity, fosses, drawbridges, and all the other resources of the engineer's art. But its very greatness proved its ruin. The governor, De Launay, though fearless when brought face to face with personal danger, was not a man of either moral courage or presence of mind. For some days he had shown such apprehension of the temper of the people, and such doubt of the ability of the fortress to resist an attack, that De Besenval had urged De Broglie to supersede him. It could not, however, be denied that he had reason to be discouraged. His garrison, which consisted of only eighty-two superannuated soldiers, and thirty-two Swiss guards, was not sufficient to hold a single tower; he had begged for a reinforcement of men, and for supplies of provisions, of which he was almost destitute; but De Broglie, with singular and inexcusable improvidence, had neglected both his request and De Besenval's warning. He retained De Launay in his command, and refused him the means of discharging his duty. The mob, on the other hand, found a leader singularly fitted for their purpose: Santerre, a master brewer of great wealth, very popular with the lower classes, among whom he had more than once exercised a magnificent charity on some of the recent occasions of general distress, but in whom every other feeling had now yielded to the frenzy of revolution. He was a man of great courage and personal strength; and under his guidance, before midday the mob began to fire at the sentinels; and with audacity more singular than even their boldness in attacking the fortress, sent two of their body

to summon De Launay to withdraw the heavy guns which commanded the approach. With a weakness which might have seemed to proceed from treachery, though it had no such origin, he admitted the messengers to his presence, to show them that the guns were not loaded; and the men, dismissed in safety, returned to their comrades with the intelligence that they had not much to dread from the governor. In fact, he presently received a second and larger deputation, who came to require him to surrender altogether; and, while he was parleying with them, a handful of men scaled the walls in a quarter where there was no sentinel, and let down a small drawbridge, which opened from the street into a detached court, where the governor's house stood. Crowds of armed men rushed in; and, while some betook themselves to the pillage of the dwelling-house, others began to saw the chains of the principal drawbridge which led into the great central court. Then, at last, De Launay gave the word to fire; but only to the musketeers. Though a battery loaded with grape commanded the court, and would have cleared it in an instant, he shrank from employing it; and presently some companies of the guards, the regiment whose mutiny had been the commencement of the tumults, joined in the attack, bringing their practised courage and disciplined skill to the aid of the less organized valour of the rioters; and at the same time the drawbridge fell, let down, it is believed, by some traitor in the garrison.

There was still an inner yard, into which the governor now fell back for some time. He had hoped that De Besenval would come to his assistance; but that officer, who had written to De Broglie for orders, had received no answer, and, perplexed by his injunctions to avoid bloodshed, would not take on him-

self the responsibility of acting without such aid. All protracted resistance had become impossible. De Launay's only resource was to surrender the fortress; and he was making up his mind to the humiliation, when the assailants dragged into the great court a young girl whom they fancied to be his daughter, and, declaring that they would burn her alive if he did not at once surrender, began to collect bundles of straw, and set them on fire to execute their atrocious threat. She was not, however, the daughter of De Launay, but of one of his officers, M. Martigny, who, seeing her danger, rushed forward to save her, but was shot down as he advanced. The poor girl fainted with horror; but was rescued from the death preparing for her by one of the mutinous guards, in whom revolutionary excitement had not yet extinguished all feelings of military honour and humanity. Meanwhile, De Launay, hanging out a white flag from the battlements, dropped out through one of the crenelles a note offering to surrender on being assured of the lives of himself and his garrison, who, as he required, were to be allowed to depart with all the honours of war. The promise was given, the regiment of guards even pledging their honour for the faithful observance of the stipulations. But the soldiers knew not the ferocity of the ruffians of whom they had condescended to become the comrades, and who now, with frightful clamour demanding blood and victims, menaced the guards themselves, when they attempted to remind them of the terms of the capitulation. Above all, they sought the governor. Other officers of the garrison, as they got them into their power, they cut down, and left unheeded. To De Launay, merely because he had been the governor, for no one pretended to have any cause of personal complaint against him, they grudged a

soldier's death. The guards made gallant efforts for his protection. Two of them, with prodigious exertions, forced their way with him through the raging crowd, bearing aloft the capitulation which had been signed on the point of their swords. But at last he was torn from their hands and hanged to a lamp-post; and of his garrison, officer after officer shared his fate. One, a Major De Losme, had been conspicuous for his humanity to the prisoners under his charge; and one of the crowd who had been confined there, bearing testimony to his virtues, implored mercy for him, and tried in vain to ward off the blows which were aimed at him. De Losme was hacked to death. Some even of the peaceful citizens, who had no connexion with the Bastille, but were suspected of not sympathizing with its captors, were similarly murdered; and, as a termination of the whole, De Launay's corpse was mangled by his assassins, who cut off his head, and the hands of some of his fellow-victims, and sticking them on pikes, paraded them through the city: too characteristic trophies of their exploit, and a fearful omen of what was to come. The Bastille had been an especial object of enmity, as a prison, rather than as a fortress; and, while one portion of the victorious multitude was employed in these atrocities, other bands were forcing their way into the dungeons. They found many proofs of the cruelties of former governments; but equally convincing testimony of the mildness of the present sovereign. The instruments of torture were rusted with long disuse; and the prisoners confined within the walls were only seven; four of whom were felons whose crimes of forgery and coining being reckoned by the old law of France, as of most other countries at the time, to partake of a treasonable character, entitled them to a place in the state prison,

instead of in the ordinary gaols; the other three were profligate nobles, whose families had procured their confinement to silence the scandal their debaucheries were bringing upon ancient and honorable names.

Before night, the news of what had happened reached Versailles. The Assembly had been so greatly agitated by the dismissal of Necker, and the tumults of the 12th and 13th, that since the morning of the 12th they had not adjourned for a single hour, but had maintained one continual sitting for two days and nights. The preceding day had been spent by them in passing votes of confidence in Necker, of disapproval of the new ministry, and of protest against the scheme of declaring the national bankruptcy, which M. Foulon was supposed to entertain. And the events of this day contributed greatly at first to their excitement, and afterwards to their encouragement. At first it was believed that the troops had gained the day, and the Assembly addressed violent remonstrances to the king on the conduct of his soldiers in massacring the citizens, with a more urgent request than before for their instant removal from the neighbourhood of the city. Mirabeau, in a speech of great violence, affirmed that emissaries of the court had been exciting the regiments with wine and bribes, predicted the subjugation of the whole nation, and threatened the instant destruction of the Assembly. But when the truth was positively ascertained, when it was beyond a doubt that the Bastille was taken, its garrison slaughtered, and the populace triumphant, no deputy had a word of pity for the innocent victims, or any thought but how they might best push the advantage which had thus been gained over the king. Mirabeau, whose ultimate political object was the establishment of a constitution like that of England, had learnt, with

a party in England itself, to ascribe a portion of the success of the Revolution of 1688 to the change of dynasty which substituted for the reigning sovereign another member of the same family; and the relationship of the Duke d'Orleans to Louis XIV. had suggested to him the idea that a similar experiment in France might be attended with similar results. He desired, therefore, now to procure the nomination of the Duke d'Orleans as lieutenant-general, with a view to the deposition of the king, and the establishment of a new dynasty; and he had urged the duke to claim the appointment on the plea of the disturbed state of the kingdom. But the duke's irresolution stood in the way of his disloyal ambition. On the morning of the 15th he repaired to the palace to make the demand; but as he ascended the stairs his heart failed him, and instead of forcing himself on Louis, he only went to the closet of the prime minister, to utter a few unmeaning phrases about the state of affairs, and to request leave to retire to England if it should become more serious. Louis had learnt the full details of what had occurred from the Duke de Liancourt: but he did not yet appreciate the magnitude of the danger to the State. "It is a tumult,"* said he, when he had heard the narrative. "Sire," replied the duke, "it is a revolution." But a few hours brought him better hopes. The success of the mob, and the ferocious use which they had made of it, had alarmed the Assembly itself, which, as the king's advisers assured him, was disposed by these events to greater moderation than it had hitherto displayed. If he would yield to their demand for the withdrawal of the troops, whose presence was

* "Une émeute."

now clearly useless, there was a chance that he might recover some portion of his authority. Yielding to these views, at midday the king repaired to the hall of the Assembly without any military escort or courtly retinue, but attended only by his brothers, and in a short speech, full of assurances of his confidence in their fidelity and willingness to co-operate with him in the restoration of tranquillity, announced that he had already issued orders for the removal of the soldiers, and desired them to make his concession known in Paris. So eager was the Assembly, for the moment, to find any opening for a reconciliation, that his speech was interrupted with loyal acclamations. And when Louis quitted the hall, the whole body of deputies attended him back to the palace, cheering him and the queen, who came out on the balcony holding the little dauphin by the hand, and bowed her acknowledgments.

But if the events of the 14th had given a fatal blow to the authority of the king, the Assembly, too, had to learn that it had wrested the chief power from their hands also, and had transferred it to the citizens of the capital. A deputation of their body had been despatched to Paris with the news of the removal of the soldiers; but the populace were not inclined to be satisfied with their assurances alone, but required that Louis himself should visit the city. When the deputation returned, his advisers were unanimous against his consenting. Even while the deputies had been cheering Marie Antoinette on the balcony, the populace had shown a very different feeling. Agents of the Duke d'Orleans, some of whom were of noble birth, were seen distributing money among them, and inflaming them with invectives against the king and queen, and

with prophecies of the speedy overthrow of the throne.* And the ministers suspected, not without reason, that it was intended to attack and assassinate the king on his road. It was certain that designs were formed against the lives of many of themselves; for already placards had been posted about the streets of Paris denouncing De Broglie, De Breteuil, Barentin, with other ministers and officers, and even the Count d'Artois, as enemies of the people, and such a denunciation was a sentence of instant death, if the objects of it should only fall into the power of those who thus proscribed them. Many, and the queen among them, were earnest that Louis should rather trust himself to the troops, who had already received their orders to draw off towards Picardy, thinking that the agitators, whether in or out of the Assembly, would be rendered more submissive by finding him out of their reach and in safety. The queen even burnt her papers and packed up her jewels in preparation for an instant departure, and did not abandon the design without tears and bitter forebodings, shared by no one at the time, but doomed to be too sadly realized afterwards. Her terrors were not for herself, but for the king; but the idea was discarded as one which would have left the field completely open to the Duke d'Orleans, and the plan which was adopted had at least the merit of disconcerting the duke's designs.† Louis was so far like

* Madame de Campan, c. xiv. She especially names the Marquis de St. Huruge, a profligate of, in Lamartine's opinion, weak intellect, but inextinguishable ferocity. His family had sought to check the scandal he brought on their name by procuring his imprisonment in the Bastille, from which he had only been released by the mob the day before.—"History of the Girondins," xvi. 10.

† "Mirabeau, qui cette résolution étonna, et son exécution encore plus, me dit ensuite, 'Celui qui a conseillé cette démarche est un hardi mortel. Sans cela Paris était perdu pour lui. Deux ou trois jours plus tard il n'aurait peut-être pas été maître d'y rentrer.'"—Dumont, p.,81.

his queen that alarms of personal danger to himself never influenced him. In the present instance he believed that by encountering it he might even ensure the safety of his friends, and he therefore determined that he would visit the city, whilst they should escape to the Flemish frontier. The Count d'Artois, with one or two of the most prominent and obnoxious of the nobles, fled as he desired, thus setting the example which was afterwards so fatally followed by the great mass of the most distinguished nobles. It has been ingeniously and powerfully defended by the most eloquent of their body.* But even he was unable to produce any argument in its favour but the very lowest, the desire of personal safety, which, when so displayed, is but another name for fear. It was not the act of bravery, for it was a flight from danger, which brave men confront, and often avert by confronting it; it was the renunciation of hope at the very outset of the contest, which, except in the very last extremity, a brave man never relinquishes. It was not the act of wisdom, for it was throwing the whole management of the revolution which was taking place into the hands of men incapable of guiding it. Even with a view to their personal interests, it was in the highest degree impolitic; for it was leaving all they valued, except indeed their lives, at the mercy of those whom by their flight they showed that they regarded as their irreconcilable enemies. Above all, it was not the act of virtue, for it was the dereliction of the first duty of every citizen, to defend his king and to serve his country. And the error brought its own punishment. For when the king had been slaughtered, and the country deluged

* "Chateaubriand's Memoirs," quoted by Alison.

in blood, the possessions of the nobles were confiscated; and the emigrants, destitute, and at last justified in their hopelessness, were doomed to experience year after year the worst hardships of exile and poverty; to learn how bitter is the bread of another bestowed in charity; how humiliating the dependence on, and often fruitless solicitation of, a stranger's aid and patronage.

On the 17th Louis himself set out in his carriage for Paris. On the previous night he received fresh and more precise intelligence that a plot was formed against his life,* and he prepared for his journey as men prepare for death. He burnt his papers; he drew up a deed by which, in the event of his murder or of his detention as a prisoner, he appointed the Count de Provence regent of the kingdom; he received the sacrament, and took leave of the queen, who despaired of ever seeing him again, and besought him in vain to abandon his purpose. He took with him a very few of his guards† for the sake of dignity, not of pro-

* Lacretelle affirms as incontestable (ce fait n'a jamais été revoqué en doute) that when the king's carriage reached the Champs Élysées three shots were fired, one of which killed a woman in the crowd; and another bullet passed through the hat of the Marquis de Cubière, who was riding close to the carriage door. He hints that the fire may have been accidental, from the awkwardness of new soldiers, Lafayette with a division of the national guards having met him at Sèvres. I cannot find, however, that any writer of the time mentions the fact at all.—See "Moore's View," &c., p. 355.

† Lacretelle calls them four hundred gardes du corps, but Madame de Campan says there were but twelve gardes du corps, and la garde bourgeoise de Versailles, c. xiv. Lacretelle adds that the king was accompanied by the Count de Provence, but this appears to be a mistake; at least Madame de Campan, who saw him start, and who professes to give a list of those who were with him, does not mention his name, nor does Madame de Lamballe, nor does Louis Blanc. Moreover, as the king had appointed him regent in the event of his own death or captivity, it seems highly improbable that he would have taken him with him to encounter the same dangers.

tection, and as small a retinue as possible, carefully selected from those nobles who stood highest in the favour of the citizens. The greater part of the deputies escorted him on foot; and, as he proceeded, a crowd of peasants, armed with bludgeons, pitchforks, and other working tools, flocked in to swell the train, with a purpose which was never understood, but could hardly have been peaceful or loyal. Bailly, just made mayor of Paris, received him at the barrier, with Lafayette, on whom the Committee at the Hôtel de Ville had conferred the command of their newly-raised force, to which they had already given the name of the National Guard; and the needless insolence of his speech, which was heard by many of the deputies themselves with indignation, was well calculated to have shaken the king's resolution, and to have made him question the prudence of placing himself in his power. "Sire," said he, "I present your majesty with the keys of your good city of Paris; the same which were presented to Henry IV. He had conquered his people. To-day the people have conquered their king."

Louis felt the insult; but felt also that, at such a moment, mere words were beneath his notice. He whispered to his principal attendant, the Marshal de Beauveau, that he had better not seem to hear them;* and now, preceded by the mayor, continued his progress to the Hôtel de Ville, through a dense crowd of men formidably though still irregularly armed, many of whom had already clothed themselves in the new uniform of the national guard, every one of whom wore the tri-colour in his hat, and the great majority of whom evinced by their gloomy silence and angry looks the discontent and eagerness for change which

* Dumont, p. 82.

had superseded in their hearts the ancient loyalty of Frenchmen to their sovereign. Here and there one more bitter-minded, or more excited than his comrades, raised the new cry, "*Vive la nation;*" but no one ventured to repeat the time-honoured acclamation of "*Vive le roi.*"* When he reached the Hôtel de Ville a fresh insult awaited him; Bailly presented him with a tri-colour cockade, the memorial of the defeat of his soldiers, and the emblem of revolt. But the act had an effect on which the giver had not calculated. Adhering to the rule which he had prescribed to himself of complying with everything and bearing everything, the king took it in silence, and fastening it in his hat presented himself at the window to the crowd; while Count Lally, who, as a deputy of the Assembly, had accompanied the procession from Versailles, and who, though convinced of the necessity of extensive constitutional reform, preserved undiminished respect for the royal authority and the royal person, addressed the populace in a few well-timed and happily conceived sentences, claiming their love for the king as one who had already shown his love to them by conferring on them the benefit of a representative assembly; who was prepared to grant them other blessings, and who sought no reward but their attachment. He exhorted them to swear to maintain for ever his legitimate authority. And the people, easily swayed, caught the enthusiasm of the speaker, and shouted out *Vive le roi* with as great apparent fervour and sincerity as had ever greeted the most feared or the most beloved of his predecessors. Louis

* "That this did not happen by accident was evident, for men were heard admonishing the people, 'Ne criez pas *Vive le roi.*'"—"Moore's View," &c., i. 355.

himself merely bowed, and declared that his people could always count upon his affection; and then returned to Versailles. Till he reached the barrier, his progress back was a complete ovation; the sight of the tri-colour, which he still wore in his hat, seemed to the people such a sign of pardon for all the outrages of the last few days, and, what they were far more anxious for, of a complete ratification of all the acts and resolutions of the Assembly at Versailles, that they looked upon all their wishes as accomplished, and followed his carriage with the most enthusiastic and unanimous cheering. The only exception to the universal joy was to be found among the partisans of the Duke d'Orleans, whose plans of aggrandizement the events of the day had entirely disconcerted; but their sullen silence was unnoticed.

Still greater was the joy of the queen and her attendants. All the morning Marie Antoinette had been a prey to the most agitating forebodings. She had fully expected, if her husband were not assassinated on his road, that at least he would be detained as a prisoner or a hostage by the committee at the Hôtel de Ville. And in expectation of such an event she had made up her mind to repair with the children to the Assembly, to claim the protection of that body; she had learnt by heart the short speech which she intended to address to them,* and had her carriages in readiness to depart at any moment. But in the course of the afternoon trustworthy messengers brought her word that all had gone off well: and when at last Louis himself rejoined her, exhausted indeed with excitement and fatigue, but unhurt; and when she heard the acclamations with which the

* Madame de Campan, c. xiv.

populace of the town, following the lead of the metropolis, saluted him on his return, her despondency gave way to exultation, and she looked on his popularity and authority as completely re-established. Louis was less elated. The sudden transition of the Parisians from rebellious discontent to vociferous loyalty, had impressed him with the feeling that from a people so impulsive, so fickle, and so precipitate and violent in acting on any opinion which they might adopt, the very worst might be apprehended, rather than with any belief in his permanent security. And a very brief space of time showed that his uneasiness was better founded than the queen's confidence.

The departure of M. de Breteuil had left him without a minister. But, even before it had been decided that he was to leave Versailles, the king had written to recall Necker,* begging him, as the greatest proof he could give of the sincerity of his attachment to his person, to return with all possible speed. Necker had gone to Bâle, so that it was not till the 23rd that the king's letter reached him; and already the populace of Paris had been re-excited to fury, and had committed more cruel outrages than ever. Among those whose names had been placarded as enemies of the people was M. Foulon, who in the new ministry had been appointed paymaster of the army and of the marine. He was known as a man of severe and almost fierce disposition; and, moreover, was strongly opposed to the views of the Orleanists; indeed, he had secretly advised the king to arrest the duke and bring him to trial. And, though this counsel had not been divulged, his enmity to that faction was sufficiently

* The letter, with Necker's answer, are given by M. Feuillet de Conches, Nos. 142, 143.

known to make them resolved on his destruction. They spread a report that he had made a jest of the distress from which the people were still suffering, saying that nettles and hay were food good enough for them. And the hatred which by these arts they had kindled against him in the minds of the citizens was so well known that he had fled to his country seat, hoping from thence to escape to the frontier. But he was betrayed by some of his servants to a band of brigands under the disguise of peasants, who seized, bound, and carried him to Paris, with a crown of nettles on his head, and a gag of hay in his mouth, in derision of the cruel speech attributed to him. He was brought to the Hôtel de Ville, where Bailly and Lafayette, with the view of giving the popular fury time to cool, began to examine him judicially. But that was too long a process for those who had already condemned him. The mob burst into the room in which he was being interrogated; for a moment his examiners themselves were in danger, as some of the most ferocious of the rioters accused them of desiring his escape. Foulon himself they dragged downstairs, and at once hung to a lamp-post. Twice the cord broke, and the trembling victim (he was seventy-five years of age) was dashed to the ground, and, bruised and bleeding, again lifted up to his death. The rage of his executioners did not cease with his life; they tore his very corpse to pieces, and cutting off his head,* bore it through the streets on a pike, as a trophy of their vengeance and their power.

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* Madame de Campan even adds that, "son cœur fut porté, le dirai-je? par des femmes, au milieu d'un bouquet d'œillets blancs." But the last editor of her Memoirs, M. Barrière, remarking that this horrible anecdote is recorded by no one else, refuses to believe it for the honour of human nature. It would certainly be quite credible two months later.

Nor was he their only victim. Hardly was he dead, when another section of the mob was seen dragging after them M. Berthier, the intendant of the city, who had committed no offence against them beyond that of being Foulon's son-in-law. As they approached the Hôtel de Ville they were met by the ruffians who were carrying Foulon's head still bleeding, and who in horrid mockery presented it to his kinsman. He first averted his eyes, and then bowed in tender respect to his father-in-law's memory. The action excited those in whose power he was to greater fury. He treated them and their threats with contempt. They were maddened, he said, by their own violence. And he disdained to die by the death which they were contriving for him. As they were bringing the rope to hang him, with a sudden effort he freed himself from those who held him, seized a musket from one of the national guard who was standing by, shot down one of his intended assassins, and in an instant was himself shot down and bayonetted. One monster even plunged his sword into his breast and tore out his heart; he was not a citizen but a dragoon, and he paid for his ferocity with his own life; his comrades, not yet completely brutalized, felt so savage an outrage a stain on the honour of the regiment, and before night one of them challenged and killed him.*

Whatever event we may look on as the commencement of the Revolution, it is quite clear that it had now entered on its course, and had broken down every barrier that could have interposed to check its power or rapidity of action. The king, though not in name dethroned, had found himself unable to protect either

* Louis Blanc, ii. 386.

his military officers or his civil ministers, who had been murdered for no offence but that of being such, and zealous in his service. From this time forth the Revolution proceeds incessantly to its consummation. It may be compared to the Alpine flood which laid waste the valley of Martigny. For a long time the Dranse had been silently gathering itself into one vast lake among the hills behind a barrier of ice; and the inhabitants below paid no regard to, were not even aware of their danger till it had grown to such a height that it was apparent to all that the slightest delay in dealing with it must be fatal. Instantly they tried to remove it, seeking to find an outlet for the waters which might discharge them in an innocuous, or even in a fertilizing stream. But they were too late. Though the leaders of the enterprize were men of courage and capacity, the evil had become too monstrous for any system of gradual reduction or relief. The very outlet, which with infinite labour and skill had been provided, added to the evil: for the first waters, as they passed through, undermined the rest of the dyke, and in a moment liberated the whole mass. Downwards it rushed over the valley below in one irresistible torrent of destruction.* Not only crops and orchards, but the dwellings of man and the temples of God, went down before it. The labourer's cot, the wealthy farmer's homestead, perished together; the bridges by which passengers had been wont to cross the stream in ordinary times were swept away. The very landmarks were de-

* In a description of this great inundation, which took place in 1818 (see Beattie's "Switzerland," p. 44), he introduces it with the observation, "The sterility caused by an Alpine torrent is more incurable than that produced by a stream of lava. The latter may only suspend for a time the progress of vegetation: the latter cancels it for ever."

stroyed. And when at last the flood had spent its fury, and exhausted itself: when man could return in safety to his labour and began to apply himself to remedy the damage that had been done, no exertions could either efface the traces of the ruin, nor eradicate its effects. Not only present prosperity, but the sources of future prosperity had been destroyed. In many districts the very soil had been washed away; and nothing was left but the barren rock, which no skill or industry could cultivate. Though years have since passed by the valley has never reassumed its former appearance; and it seems as if nothing but some fresh convulsion, which no one can anticipate, can restore it. Very similar has been the French Revolution. Abuses in the Government, which, though they had been incessantly increasing, had long been unheeded, had at last become so prodigious as to force themselves upon the general attention. But the very first attempt to remove them let loose a torrent of angry passions and irrational unbridled desires, beneath which good and bad were indifferently overwhelmed. Human law and divine commandment were alike trampled under foot; and things the most insignificant were not better protected or safer than the proudest or the holiest. Not only nobles and princes, not only the palace and the cathedral, but humble peasants, innocent maidens, even prattling children, were not beneath the notice or safe from the ferocity of those who for a time held sway in the land. And when at last the storm of popular frenzy had wasted itself, when men tried to repair the ravage that had been committed, though among those who lent themselves to the task have been statesmen and warriors, whose civil and military capacity has never been exceeded, they have been powerless to do

away the traces of the ruin that has been. The landmarks of society, the foundations on which its welfare and stability can alone rest, respect for established order and usage, and constituted authority, have been eradicated too thoroughly ever to be replaced: while liberty, which in other countries, where revolution has been temperate and humane, has been born of the struggle, and has derived growth and fulness and ripeness and strength from its recollection and its effects, has in France been obtained in a most scanty and imperfect degree. The material prosperity of the people is undoubtedly greatly improved; a powerful and sagacious government is developing the resources of the country to an extent which Turgot himself never dreamt of. But still the press is more enslaved than even when Beaumarchais made the restrictions on it the object of his satire. And if freedom of thought, of speech, and of writing be essential to true liberty, it can hardly be denied that the nation is as far as ever from its attainment.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

On the 27th Necker reached Versailles, where he was at once replaced in his office as controller. Some of the most important of his own colleagues had already been restored; but to them scarcely any one gave a thought: in the eyes of the nation he was not only the chief, but the sole minister. His journey to Paris had been one long triumphal procession, the citizens escorting him, and often drawing his carriage into and out of the different towns, and the regimental bands playing as after a victory.* On the 28th he presented himself to the assembly, and on the 29th he paid a formal visit to Paris. His vanity was amply gratified by the exuberant joy which was expressed by all classes at seeing him again; and which was so great that they even overlooked the solecism in fashion which he had committed by causing his wife to accompany him. When he came out on the balcony of the Hôtel de Ville Madame Necker and Madame de Staël also showed themselves at his side; and the air was rent with cheers which reminded calmer bystanders of the acclamations which greet the pope when he blesses the populace of Rome from St. Peter's.† But he was no longer as sanguine as before. The murders of

* See Arthur Young's account of his arrival at Béfort, July 25.

† Moore's Journal, i. 375. The doctor adds:—"What rendered this sublime spectacle entirely new was that a man and his wife were hardly

Foulon and Berthier had made a deep impression on his mind; and other less well-known men, bakers and dealers in provisions, had perished under circumstances of similar atrocity and horror on unproved and probably groundless charges of having enhanced the price of food by their modes of dealing; and on his road he had received more than one proof that the frenzy which had prompted such crimes was not confined to the capital. The country villages and post-towns were inflamed by the most ridiculous stories of outrages on the people planned by the court, and especially by the queen;* and in several places formidable riots had taken place, the most determined efforts being made by the rioters to obtain arms. He was soon to learn that over the very assembly which now received him so rapturously his influence was of a most limited character. In one of the tumults which he had witnessed on his journey he had had the courage and the good fortune to rescue from the mob the Baron de Bésenval, who had fallen into their hands, and whom they were hurrying to Paris with the most ferocious threats; and in the enthusiasm produced by his first appearance at the Hôtel de Ville he had procured from the magistrates of the town council not only the pardon of the baron but a general amnesty in favour of all those who had incurred

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ever seen in public together at Paris. It required a revolution in the State and all M. Necker's popularity to prevent an exhibition so contrary to established manners from seeming ridiculous in the eyes of the Parisians."

* The news at the table d'hôte at Colmar is curious, that the queen had a plot, nearly on the point of execution, to blow up the National Assembly by a mine, and to march the army instantly to massacre all Paris. A French officer present presumed to doubt the truth of it, and was immediately overpowered with numbers of tongues. A deputy had written it, they had seen the letter, and not a doubt could be admitted.—A. Young, date July 24, 1789.

the wrath of the populace by their obedience to the king. But the very next day Mirabeau harangued the assembly against so general a pardon as an act beyond the competency of the committee which had passed it: though it was in fact only a security against being murdered without trial, he denounced it as a measure to give unreasonable confidence to the enemies of liberty; and he procured its repeal. Necker had so far succeeded in his humane object that he had secured De Bésenval the advantage of a legal trial before a regular tribunal, which eventually acquitted him. But he saw in the revocation of the amnesty a sad indication of the sanguinary character the Revolution was about to assume, and in bitterness of heart exclaimed that his happiness had been of short duration.*

He, in common with every man who was not dead to the most ordinary feelings of humanity, had daily increasing cause for such an exclamation. The report of the crimes which had been committed in Paris had reached the provinces, and seemed to have excited no feeling but a desire to rival them. The frenzy of murder had spread its horrid contagion over almost every part of the country. The western provinces were generally loyal and quiet; but north, south, and east, in Normandy, in Alsace, in Provence, the citizens rose against the wealthy townsmen, the peasants against their landlords, burning houses and massacring the owners with circumstances of unheard-of barbarity. Some were torn in pieces; some were roasted alive; some had actually portions of their flesh cut off and eaten by their murderers before their eyes, before the blow was given which terminated their agonies. Their sex did not save ladies from being at

* Louis Blanc, ii. 400.

times the victims of such atrocities, nor did it prevent women from being the actors in them. One murder is especially remarkable for the revenge taken for it four years afterwards. M. de Belzunce, the commander of a battalion quartered at Caen, had been so energetic and successful in preserving discipline among his men that he had attracted the notice of Marat in Paris, and had been denounced by him in his newspaper. Such a denunciation was of itself sufficient to rouse a mob against him. A vast crowd traversed the streets of Caen shouting his name and threatening him with instant death. His regiment had already been withdrawn, and at the request of the terrified magistrates he himself had taken refuge in the citadel; but the mob forced it, dragged him out, and tore him limb from limb, feasted on his body, and set up his head as a ghastly trophy in the market-place. Other atrocities drove this one from the memory of most of the witnesses, and even from that of the actors; but there was one person who did not forget him. His aunt was the abbess of the principal monastery in the town; and among the inmates was a young girl of a noble but decayed family, Charlotte, the daughter of M. de Corday d'Armont.* She had caught from her father, who was an ardent politician, a portion of the general enthusiasm for reform: but she had even before that formed an intimacy with and conceived a tender friendship for the young officer now so cruelly slaughtered; and his fate stamped in her mind an abhorrence of such deeds of blood, which afterwards grew as they multiplied till it inspired her with the strange fanatical resolution to arrest them by the death of him whom from this day she regarded as their chief author.

* Lamartine's "Histoire des Girondins," 44, 45.

Yet the horror of these scenes is scarcely stranger than the pusillanimity of the towns and districts which endured them unresistingly. For there were not wanting instances of magistrates honest enough to detest and courageous enough to chastise such outrages, whose efforts to preserve or restore order were so successful as to fix no slight criminality on those who submitted to them. In Dauphiny the states of the province raised a small guard, which made prisoners of large gangs of rioters, who were instantly hanged. In Mâcon, a similar force, though not three hundred strong, encountered a band of brigands six thousand in number, routed them, and brought back two hundred prisoners, the chiefs of whom were likewise sent to the gallows, and by their punishment tranquillity was for a time re-established. Similar firmness would have saved other districts which now allowed themselves to be the victims of ravage and murder; as afterwards it would have saved the whole country, even when the wickedness of the subsequent years was at its height; for in no part of the kingdom did those who perpetrated and sympathized with the crimes which have made the Revolution a bye-word, approach the numbers of those who loathed them, but had not courage or foresight to withstand them.

And while these iniquities were deluging the fairest rural districts with blood, other events were taking place in Paris which, though of a peaceful character and tainted with no bloodshed, afforded equally pregnant and alarming evidence of the change that had already been wrought in the feelings of every class; of the utter absence of method and moderation which characterized the leaders of every party in the assembly; and of the absolute impotency of the king's Govern-

ment, not one member of which took the very slightest share in prompting or guiding a series of measures which, while abolishing abuses, overthrew at the same time much that was venerable and sacred; which, instead of repairing or refashioning ancient establishments and institutions, tore them up from the foundations; and in a few days, it might almost be said in a few hours, overthrew the whole fabric of society as it had previously existed throughout the whole kingdom.

Necker, still unable to conceive that anything was of equal importance with the removal of the financial embarrassments, devoted himself to that object so entirely that he left to the assembly, which consequently began to be known as the Constituent Assembly, the still more important task of devising and arranging the constitutional reforms which had been promised. He was so far from seeing that it was indispensable to the dignity of the king, and not less to the sobriety and practical usefulness of the measures to be adopted that they should be initiated by the Government itself, that he did not even reserve for himself or for any of his colleagues the least power of guiding or interfering with the deliberations of the assembly on the subject: but contented himself with the consideration that the sanction of the crown would be requisite to give its recommendations the force of law; overlooking the difficulty, in fact amounting to impossibility, which in the present state of affairs the king would find in refusing it.

The assembly itself was divided into three parties: the extreme conservatives on the Right; the extreme reformers on the Left; and between them the party of the Plain (of the Marsh, as it was sometimes called in

derision by its adversaries*), or the moderate constitutionalists. The first was numerically weak, consisting only of a few of the nobles and prelates of highest rank, with about thirty deputies of the commons,† and still weaker in point of practical talents. Its leaders were the Abbé Maury, a man of great and extensive knowledge, indomitable courage, and a rich and singularly diversified style of eloquence; full of illustration, full of irony, invincible in logic, and wanting nothing but a certain degree of impassioned fervour to be irresistible in effect; and M. de Cazalès, a military officer, the chief charm of whose oratory was exactly that quality in which the abbé was deficient. But neither of these were statesmen; and indeed the whole party was so devoid of political sagacity that they often preferred combining with the most destructive section of the Left, with which they had not one principle in common, to lending a support to the Plain, though many of the principles of the chiefs of that party, especially loyalty to the king's dignity and person, were the same as their own. The Left had many subdivisions. Some desired a republic: of these Lafayette was the most prominent member; for his campaigns in America had rendered him popular with almost every class, and he had not yet had time to show his utter incompetency whether as soldier or politician; to oratory he made no pretence. Behind them was a section, as yet very small in number, and perhaps hardly resolved on their objects, but of a temper to allow no scruples to stand in their way when once they had chosen them. Of these Robespierre‡ was the only deputy of whom

* "Masse d'hommes stagnante, qui recut le nom de marais." — L. Blanc, iii. 21.

† Madame de Staël, i. 298.

‡ It was some time later that Robespierre asked sarcastically "What was a republic?"

more than the name was known. A third section was divided from the Plain not so much by political differences as by the jealousies of personal ambition. Their chiefs were Duport du Tertre, a young lawyer of great professional knowledge, and considerable craft and address in the prosecution of his own private ends; Barnave, also under thirty years of age, a man endowed with an eloquence second to that of no one in the assembly but Mirabeau; and the two Counts Lameth, whose influence was owing to their amiability of character rather than to their talents. Barnave, the real leader of the party, in his heart agreed so completely with the views of the Plain, that in the first week of the meeting of the States-General he had sought out the Princess de Lamballe, as the lady standing highest in the queen's confidence, and after a full explanation of his political sentiments had solicited her intervention to offer his services to the queen.*

But, though the time came when Marie Antoinette declared that she would give an arm to have the

* "Ce soir même (Mai 6) Barnave vint à mon cabinet, et m'offert ses services pour la reine. Il desirait, me dit-il, convaincre sa majesté qu'il était Français; que ses vœux se bornaient à voir son pays régi par des lois salutaires, et non par le caprice de souverains sans pouvoir, ou par un ministère corrompu; que le clergé et la noblesse devaient subvénir aux bésoins de l'État, comme les autres sujets du roi; que ce résultat une fois atteint, et les abus supprimés par une réprésentation nationale qui mettrait le ministre Necker à même de réaliser ses plans pour la liquidation de la dette publique, je pourrais assurer leurs majestés qu'elles se trouveraient plus heureuses avec un gouvernement constitutionnel qu'elles ne l'avaient jamais été avec le pouvoir absolu . . . . . Que si le roi accueillait décidément l'idée de régénérer la nation, il rencontrerait parmi les réprésentans actuels beaucoup d'hommes d'honneur animés d'intentions franches et loyales qui ne s'élèveraient jamais contre le pouvoir légitime d'une monarchie témperée . . . . Je rapportai cette conversation à la reine. Elle me prêta la plus grande attention jusqu'au moment où je parlais du roi constitutionnel. Sa majesté alors perdit patience, et ne me permit pas de continuer."—"Mém. de la Princesse de Lamballe," i. 342.

English constitution established in France, her present estimate of it was widely different. She chafed at the idea of restrictions on her husband's power, as insulting; and when she heard that Barnave's hopes were directed to reducing him to the position of a constitutional instead of an absolute sovereign, she rejected his overtures with disdain. Henceforth, exasperated by the slight, Barnave's chief wish was to make her repent her imprudence, by showing her his power. He did not scruple to encourage the wildest excesses of the mob, justifying even such atrocities as the murders of Foulon and Berthier with the most unfeeling sarcasms; and though the day came, as will be seen, when he in his turn repented the violences into which his offended pride had hurried him, and sought, but sought too late, to save those whom he was now persecuting, he at present regarded the whole royal family with personal hatred.* Mirabeau's seat was on the same side, but it could not be said that he belonged to any of these sections, not even to the last. At times he acted with all, and even with the Plain, with whom indeed he coincided in all his views that were not entirely personal. With the exception of him, the Plain contained the ablest members of the assembly: Mounier and Malouet, with Clermont Tonnerre and Lally-Tollendal, two nobles of great judgment and resolution, the latter of whom as a speaker had few equals in the assembly. They were secretly favoured by Necker and almost all his colleagues, and their object was the establishment of a

* Lally-Tollendal, in his letter justifying his emigration, especially speaks of the exultation which Barnave showed in the assembly during the attack on Versailles. "M. Barnave riant avec lui [Mirabeau] quand des flots de sang coulaient autour de nous."—See the letter, quoted by Lacretelle, vii. 256.

constitution on the model of that existing in England, with such slight modifications as might be suggested by the difference of character in the two nations. Unhappily, as they agreed neither with the Right nor with the Left, both those parties agreed in regarding them as their enemies. The Right, with almost incredible blindness, often joining the Left to defeat them; and preferring to those who only sought to place intelligible limits to the royal authority, those who aimed at its total destruction.

At such a time, however, events often marched faster than those who most pretended to guide them. The task of forming a new constitution had been entrusted to a committee with Mounier at its head;* and while it was still employed on this task, and while the body of the assembly was still occupied with general matters, the intelligence reached it of fresh outrages in the provinces, which were so widely spread as to denote the prevalence of a dangerous feeling among the whole nation which seemed to require a strong and immediate remedy; and a total absence of the sagacity of statesmen, or of the decision of rulers, combined with the sympathy felt by many of the deputies in the desires and designs of the rioters to suggest the notion that the proper mode of dealing with such outbreaks was not stern chastisement, but boundless concession. The assembly, as a body, was panic-stricken. And as the alarm was most acutely felt by those who had most to lose, the nobles led the way. On the evening of the 4th of August, when, by some accident, Mirabeau, Sièyes, and several more

* The committee consisted of eight members; the others being Lally-Tollendal, Clermont Tonnerre, Talleyrand, Sièyes, Le Chapélier, Barnave, and Cicé, Archbishop of Bordeaux."—L. Blanc, iii. 54.

of the most influential deputies were absent, the Viscount de Noailles, as if by some sudden impulse, unexpectedly rose and declared that the only effectual means of arresting the progress of the disorders brought to their notice lay in satisfying all the wishes of the people, whom ages of oppression had exasperated; and accordingly he moved the instant abolition of all the exclusive privileges which belonged to the nobles either as a body or individually. A second noble proposed that all pensions conferred on any of the nobles by the crown should be suppressed. A deputy in the dress of a peasant, whose name was afterwards ascertained to be Guen de Kerengal, rose and complained of the feudal rights claimed by the great proprietors; of their power to harness their vassals to waggons, and to employ them in silencing frogs. He was followed by another noble who moved the extinction of every vestige of the feudal system. A deputy who, with an antiquarian turn of mind, wished to dilate upon the different kind of privileges hitherto enjoyed or claimed by the great lords, could not obtain a hearing, so impatient was the assembly of everything but a mere mention of a right and a proposal to abolish it. And every such proposal was the parent of more. The meeting was resolved into one of competition who could find anything to renounce, or, if he had nothing of his own to give up, who could devise any sacrifice to be extorted from his neighbour. The Bishop of Chartres demanded the abolition of the game laws; another bishop proposed the extinction of tithes. It is true that some of these proposals embraced a project for compensating the owners of the privileges or possessions thus condemned.

* Dumont, p. 100.

The tithes, for instance, were to be redeemed; but it required no great shrewdness to foresee that the condition was likely to be lost sight of, and that the only thing permanently valid would be the abolition. Every moment the fever of liberality grew more violent. Deputies from the different provinces rose one after another, renouncing the peculiar privileges of each. There were rights and immunities which Brittany, Burgundy, Provence, and Dauphiny, with all the pride of an honest if narrow-minded patriotism, had maintained ever since their annexation to the crown as the token of their ancient independence alike against the despotism of Richelieu, the commercial liberalism of Colbert, and the gentle seductions of Fleury. These were now all swept away in a single night; and amid the general intoxication it seems almost strange to find a single member, the Archbishop of Paris, preserving so much of his old professional notions of devotion as to remind the assembly that a series of acts so calculated to confer happiness on the nation called for a feeling of gratitude towards God, and to propose the celebration of a Te Deum.*

Maury soon took a different view of what had been done, and branded the sitting as that of the "night of dupes," in allusion to the disappointment of those who had made these sacrifices in the hope of arresting the progress of outrages and lawless spoliation; but who subsequently found that they had but stimulated the

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* It is a singular proof of the kindness of the court that some of the royal family, the Princess Elizabeth for instance, took a favorable view of what had been done. Her language is: "La noblesse, avec un enthousiasme digne du cœur Français, a renoncé à," &c. . . . and adds: "J'espère que cela fera finir la brûleur des châteaux. Ils se montent à soixante-dix. C'était à qui ferait le plus de sacrifices. Tout le monde était magnetisé."—Marie Antoinette, &c. No. 149.

appetite of the spoilers, and diminished their own power of subsequent resistance.

It was of almost equal practical importance, from its sad significance in its bearing on the future, as showing the feelings towards the king which the majority of the assembly were disposed to bring to the consideration of other affairs, that even in the very act of requesting his sanction to these resolutions the deputies could not forbear offering him the affront of withholding the ordinary expressions of deference, or it may be said of common courtesy. It had been settled to attribute to him such a share of credit for what had been done as was implied in giving him the title of Restorer of French Liberty; but when the priest Target, who had been entrusted with the task of framing the address with which the resolutions were to be presented to him, began to read the draft, at the opening words "The National Assembly has the honour to lay at your majesty's feet," he was assailed with a general storm of disapprobation. The assembly was furious at being supposed to be honoured by a royal audience. Mirabeau himself condescended to add to the discontent by a bad joke: "Majesty," he said, "had no feet."* And in the end the royal assent to the resolutions was solicited in the most brief and unceremonious terms that could be devised. Louis thought it unbecoming his dignity to ratify at a moment's notice decrees which he had had no previous opportunity of considering. Accordingly, he took time to deliberate upon them; and when at last he gave them his formal sanction, he qualified it, at least in his own mind, by the expression of an

* Louis Blanc, iii. 19.

expectation that the assembly would hereafter see the propriety of indemnifying some of the classes which would be the chief sufferers by them.

The privileges of the lay nobles were gone for ever: but the property of the clergy could not be dealt with in quite so summary a manner; and the discussions which grew out of the resolutions against tithes very nearly produced a breach between Mirabeau and the Abbé Sièyes, who had considerable influence in the assembly, and still greater weight with the populace out of doors. The original proposal respecting tithes had been to substitute for them an equivalent which should be less injurious to the landed interest and to agriculture than they were supposed to be. But when a day or two afterwards Necker made a statement of the financial difficulties of the State, the magnitude of which took the deputies in general by surprise, more than one member at once proposed to meet them by an entire confiscation of all ecclesiastical property, and the first instalment of such a measure was to be the complete abolition of tithes. Sièyes, as a beneficed churchman, was little inclined to be deprived of his own property, and spoke energetically and forcibly against the proposal; declaring that should it be adopted the French would not deserve freedom, since they would have shown themselves devoid of justice. Mirabeau on the contrary supported it with vehemence, affirming that they were not a property, but a salary paid by the nation; and as this doctrine was received with manifest dissatisfaction, he pushed it so far as to apply it to property of all kinds. He declared that he knew but three ways of living: beggary, robbery, or salary. So completely cowed were the great nobles, and at the same time so embarrassed by their own concessions on the 4th,

that no one at the time made any formal protest against so monstrous an assertion. Numbers of the clergy, in the hope of saving the rest of their property, gave up their claim to the tithes of their individual benefices; and at last the Archbishop of Paris, speaking as the authorized organ of the rest, renounced them altogether.

Yet Mirabeau presently learnt that he was only master of the assembly so long as he was giving expression to their views. Twice within the next month he found his utmost eloquence powerless alike to establish an important principle, or even to change their order of proceeding. He entirely failed to prevent them from anticipating and hampering the committee which they had appointed to frame a constitution, by a Declaration of the abstract Rights of Man; and, when the committee had completed their work so far as to present the first articles of a constitution to the assembly, he was unable to prevail upon them to grant the king the power known in the discussions as that of the absolute veto. It was a singular proof of the advance which democratic principles had made since the first meeting of the States, that any discussion should have been raised on the subject; for among all the cahiers then drawn up there was not one which supposed the possibility of any power short of an absolute veto on all measures proposed being vested in the king. But now the great majority of the deputies were unwilling to grant what three months before the most violent of their constituents could not have been brought to refuse. Mirabeau had never exerted himself with more earnestness nor with greater force of argument. Rousseau, a great authority at this time with no inconsiderable portion of the reading and thinking

public, had many years before pointed out that this power existed in England, and had never been found to produce any evil effects; and Mirabeau, expanding his arguments, and enforcing them with others drawn from the impolicy of inspiring an hereditary monarch with a distrust of the legislative body, declared that to refuse the absolute veto to the king was to confer it with all its irresponsibility on the Assembly; that a government of two hundred irresponsible deputies would be the most intolerable of all tyrannies; and that for himself he would rather live in Constantinople than in France if laws could be enacted without the king's sanction. He might perhaps have prevailed if the demagogues of the Palais Royal had not excited the populace of Paris to an incredible fury on the subject. They had no notion of even the meaning of the word; some believed veto to be a man who, as an enemy of the people, deserved hanging; some believed it to be a new tax of unusual stringency. A deputy affirmed from the tribune that he had heard one peasant explain it to another as an ordinance by which, if he had a spoonful of soup and the king ordered him to spill it instead of eating it, spill it he must.* By one representation and another the mob was inflamed to such a detestation of the veto that gangs went to Versailles, and anonymous letters were despatched thither by the hundred to threaten the deputies collectively and individually if they sanctioned any such measure:† and at last the king himself was induced by Necker to express a preference for what was called a suspensive veto;‡ a power, that is, of withholding his

* Louis Blanc, iii. 59. † Ibid. 62.

‡ "La veille M. Necker avait envoyé à M. de Clermont le résultat du Conseil, qui engageait la reine à renoncer au véto."—"Letters of Madame Elizabeth."—Marie Antoinette, &c., No. 156.

sanction from any measure till it had been passed by two successive Assemblies.

It was perhaps because he was discouraged by having been beaten on this point that on the, if possible, still more important question whether the Legislative Assembly should for the future consist of one or of two chambers, Mirabeau argued, apparently against his convictions, in favour of a single chamber. Lally-Tollendal was the chief speaker who advocated the addition of a senate with functions in some degree similar to those of the British House of Peers. But he was overborne by a great majority, and it was finally settled that there should be but one chamber, which should be re-elected every second year. But still Mirabeau was dissatisfied. After the 4th of August, and one or two excited and tumultuous debates which had followed as a sort of supplement to complete the transactions of that evening, the Assembly had settled down again into an orderly system, which was wholly unfavorable to the projects of the Orleanists, whose present views, pointing to a change of dynasty, could only be accomplished by disturbance. They were assisted, so far at least as they wanted any pretext for outrage, for which they had sufficient instruments ready at any moment, by the financial necessities of the minister; and still more by the scarcity of grain which during the latter part of August and the whole month of September pressed upon the capital with as great severity as ever. As early as the 7th of August Necker had proposed a loan of thirty millions as a temporary expedient to provide for the immediate necessities of the State, a stop-gap to give him time to devise and mature a scheme to place the whole revenue on a better footing. Unluckily the Assembly, while sanctioning the main proposal, took on itself to tamper

with it in its details, and to diminish the interest to four-and-a-half per cent. instead of five, which had been the ordinary rate for all Government loans. The alteration caused the whole scheme to fail; the moneyed men looked on it as a sign of distress, and the utmost offers to take portions of the loan did not reach one-twelfth of the sum required. Three weeks afterwards the minister was forced once more to present himself to the Assembly, on this occasion demanding eighty millions; and the Assembly, for once acknowledging the blunder it had committed, granted the fresh loan at the ordinary interest. But credit had received too rude a shock to be at once re-established, and very few capitalists were more willing to lend their money to the State than they had been at the beginning of the month.

The urgency was so great to enable the Government to buy grain to save the people from starving, that the king sent all his plate to the mint to be melted down;* and numbers of patriotic individuals, Necker himself being among the most munificent, made a similar sacrifice of all that they could spare, even to their personal jewels. But the sum thus produced did not amount to a single million. As a last resource Necker proposed a property tax of twenty-five per cent., and, greatly to his surprise, Mirabeau supported him in a speech which, in the opinion of his friends, and even of his detractors, surpassed all his previous efforts. He showed that there was no alternative between the proposal of the minister and

* In M. Feuillet de Conches' collection, No. 157, is a request from the intendant of the household to ask, as "il sera très-difficile de réchauffer en porcelaine," whether he may not keep back "un service entier en plâts pour une table de 30 couverts?". And the king's answer is, "Il faut y envoyer tous les plâts, les assiettes, et les couvercles."

a national bankruptcy; and he painted the universal and enduring ruin which would ensue from such a disaster in such terms, picturesque from their very plainness, impressive from their conciseness, and irresistible from his own energy and manifest sincerity, that no one attempted to reply to his arguments. The tax was carried unanimously.* But, as it was unavoidable that some time must elapse before any receipts could come in from that source, it had no effect on the existing distress. It was aggravated in a singular manner by the resolutions of the 4th of August; for the moment that the game laws were abolished, the whole population rushed forth to slaughter the animals that had hitherto been safe from them as the property of the nobles: not only destroying them in such heaps that they did not care to, and were unable to carry them away, but trampling down the crops just ready for the sickle, and equally destroying a great portion of the coming harvest. Throughout September the people were actually perishing of starvation in the streets of Paris. In their distress their first impulse was to look to the king for sympathy; they attributed it in a great degree to his ignorance of their condition from his absence at Versailles. They began to nickname him the Baker, as if he could at once supply them with the bread they needed; and the consequently natural desire to have him among them in the capital had for some weeks been artfully fostered by the Duke d'Orleans. Mirabeau himself was deeply implicated in, if indeed he was not the original contriver of the plot which was about to be developed. About the middle of September he had warned a friend, M. Blaizot, the librarian of the

* Dumont: "Souvenirs," &c., p. 133.

palace, that terrible events were likely soon to take place at Versailles. He had been heard to utter in the foulest language the most outrageous threats against the whole court;* and it is highly probable that the part which he took on the subject of the veto, and in support of Necker's property tax, was prompted by the confidence which he felt, that the result of the intended outbreak would be to place the Duke d'Orleans on the throne, and to make himself his prime minister.

His object, however, was that the hungry citizens of Paris should go to Versailles, not with a feeling of dutiful reliance on their king's power and willingness to relieve them, but in a spirit of indignant discontent at the hardships which they had already endured. And in his final efforts to excite the populace to seditious ill-temper he was assisted by a circumstance which had no connexion whatever with either the Parisians or the scarcity. The menacing language which he had once or twice permitted himself to hold, and that which had of late been habitually used by other less crafty instruments of D'Orleans, had created a general belief at Versailles that an attack on the palace was meditated; and the citizens, whose trade was greatly benefited by the presence of the court and the Assembly, saw how easily they themselves might be involved in the danger; how impossible, indeed, it was for any insurrection to take place which would not be deeply injurious to the whole town. With this feeling the municipal magistrates entreated the king to bring up a single regiment for their protection,

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* "Mirabeau s'était écrié en termes dont l'obscénité brutale défie toute réproduction textuelle: 'Il faut violer la cour et s'en moquer.'"—Louis Blanc, iii. 156.

which was but feebly assured by the two or three companies of body-guards which had hitherto formed their whole garrison. The request was willingly granted; a regiment known as that of Flanders was sent for from the frontier, and arrived at Versailles in the last week of September, when, according to old and hospitable fashion, the body-guard celebrated the arrival of the new-comers by inviting all the officers, with those of the town militia also, to a banquet on the 1st of October. As there was no apartment at the barracks which would hold such a number of guests, the opera-house of the palace was lent to them for the occasion; and the boxes around were filled with the chief ladies of the court and of the town, and with many also of the deputies of the Assembly as spectators. As would have been inevitable in any company of French gentlemen a year before, and as was surely still natural for officers of his own body-guard in his own palace, the healths of the king and queen were drank with enthusiastic acclamations, the sound of which reached even to the private apartments; and though it had been previously decided by the queen that it would be wise for the royal family not to seem to interfere or to have any connexion with the feast, the Count de Luxemburg, the captain of the guard, had no difficulty in persuading her that it would be a graceful and acceptable and desired recognition of such evidently sincere loyalty, if, with the king and her children, she were to honour the entertainment with a momentary visit. They went down: the excitement was redoubled, spreading among the spectators also. Loyal shouts and cheers re-echoed from every part of the theatre. The feeling awakened was so contagious that some officers of the national guard who were among the guests reversed their tricolour

cockades, and displaying the white side seemed to have resumed the honoured emblem of the days and exploits of Henry and of Condé. The band struck up an air from a new and fashionable opera, "Peut-on affliger ce qu'on aime?" which those who saw the anxiety which recent transactions had already stamped on the queen's majestic forehead, could hardly help applying to their royal mistress; and when it ceased and was succeeded by Blondel's lamentation for Richard, the first notes of the well-known "Oh, Richard! oh, mon roi, l'univers t'abandonne!" touched a chord in every heart; and the whole company, soldiers, ladies, and all were carried away in a perfect delirium of dutiful rapture. The whole body of military escorted the royal family back to their quarter of the palace; and spent the greater part of the night in demonstrations of joy and felicity which for the moment were undoubtedly sincere, though it was afterwards remarked that some of the common soldiers who on this occasion were the noisiest in their exultation, four nights afterwards were among the most furious threateners and assailants* of the palace.

The next day Mounier, as President of the Assembly for the week, presented to Louis for his assent the Declaration of the Rights of Man, with one or two articles framed by the committee, on which the Assembly had decided; such as those which were to limit the veto, and establish a single chamber. Louis, as he had done in the case of the resolutions of the 4th of August, again announced that he should take time to consider them with his Council. But it is possible that he might not have come to the same decision of sanctioning them, since Necker was of opinion that

* Madame de Campan, c. xv.

he might reasonably withhold his assent to measures which were but a part of the constitution, and might require to see the whole before he pronounced any opinion. His answer, however, afforded a pretext for great murmurs among the more violent sections of the Assembly; and, together with the banquet of the guards, was dilated on by the Orleanist agents in Paris as a proof of the incurably hostile disposition with which the court regarded the people and their claims. About the banquet especially the most ridiculous stories were circulated among the mob: it was affirmed, and believed, that the body-guards had trampled the tricolour under foot; and, with the Flanders soldiers, had sharpened their swords and vowed to massacre the Assembly, and then to rush on Paris and exterminate the people: neither those who related, nor those who heard the tale stopping to consider that those who were thus to obtain the mastery over the second city in Europe did not amount to fifteen hundred men. There had been another dinner on the 2nd, when the Flanders regiment returned the hospitality it had received by giving a dinner to the body-guard; and this also was laid hold of as evidence how, while the people were famishing, the court was feasting. Against the nobles and great proprietors calumnies still more calculated to inflame the populace were scattered with still less foundation. They were said to have stopped the transport of corn from the rural districts to the towns; and to have even excused their tenants from the present payment of their rent, in order to enable them to afford to keep their crops back from market. And the conspirators at Versailles were equally busy, and almost equally successful in debauching the allegiance of the troops; lavishing money among them, providing them with

means for every kind of excess,* and thus seducing to act against the crown no small portion of the very men who had been brought up for its defence.

Among the reports by which it was sought to inflame the people to instant action was one that a short delay would render any action impossible, since the king was preparing to depart, and to transfer the Assembly to some town at a safer distance from the capital than Versailles. It was as false as any of the other assertions, but not equally unfounded; for such a plan had been in agitation, and had been approved by every one but the king himself. It was impossible that such an extensive conspiracy as that of the Orleanists could be kept secret; indeed, as their object was to intimidate the king into flight from the kingdom, they had no wish to conceal their movements; and as early as the middle of September intelligence reached the Assembly that the citizens of Paris were meditating an attack on them, and even that the day was fixed on which it was to take place, the 5th of October.† The alarm was great. The majority of the Assembly, and even of the deputies of the commons, were still, except on one or two points, such as the veto and the number of chambers, men inclined to moderate measures; and even among those disposed to go further, many entertained a reasonable dread of being exposed to the blind fury of such mobs as had stormed the Bastille or murdered Foulon. Mounier and Malouet took counsel with their party: they sounded the deputies of the commons; Lally-Tollendal and the Bishop of Langrès, who was President of the Assembly at the moment, ascertained the

* Evidence of Mounier, "Procédure du Châtelet," quoted by Croker, p. 45.

† "Annales de Bertrand de Moleville," ii. 173, *et seq.*

views of the nobles and clergy; and when they found that a decided majority of each order was in favour of removing, they addressed themselves to Necker with an earnest recommendation that the king should anticipate and baffle the intended insurrection by removing the court and the Assembly to Tours. Necker and all his colleagues approved the design; but with the infatuated scrupulousness which governed all the king's decisions on matters which primarily involved his personal safety, he refused his consent. He had laid down a rule, which since his visit to Paris in July he had had continually on his lips, that he would never risk the shedding of a single drop of blood for his personal safety; and he feared that his departure from the neighbourhood would be a signal for civil war. He was partly moved also by an apprehension that, when he had removed so far, any fresh danger might lead the same advisers to recommend his withdrawal from the kingdom; and, as he had of late been a diligent student of the English history of the preceding century, he knew that the English Parliament had treated the flight of James as an act of abdication. If, when a few days afterwards he saw his faithful guards massacred in the outbreak of which he had been warned, the life of his queen threatened, and himself dragged from Versailles against his will, he did not regret the resolution to which he had come, he certainly repented of it at a later period, when a similar step was urged upon him by the very man whose whole energies at that moment were directed to his overthrow; and when later still he endeavoured to put it in execution, having learnt that his delay had certainly not avoided bloodshed, nor saved the lives of many of his misguided subjects and of some of his most faithful servants. The removal of the Assembly

to the same city to which he had transferred his own residence would have disabled the most violent demagogue from representing his departure from Versailles as a flight: while, on the other hand, subsequent events seem to prove that the placing both himself and the Assembly in the power of the Parisian mob, which was the immediate result of his rejection of Mounier's proposal, was also the circumstance which above all others was the cause of the horrors which stained the subsequent progress of the Revolution.

As the day appointed for the outbreak drew near, the conspirators increased in audacity. On the 4th, a deputy named Pétion, an attorney at Chartres by profession, and now beginning to make himself a name by the frequency and violence of his harangues at the Breton Club, denounced the proceedings at the banquet of the 1st with great vehemence, affirming that it had been but the beginning of a plot formed by great personages against the existence of the Assembly. He was supported by Mirabeau as zealously as Necker had been the week before. That great speaker had too much confidence in his own talents and also too callous a shamelessness to care how much he laid himself open to charges of inconsistency; and he had just been taught the policy of not too far alienating the Breton Club by a recent debate. A motion had been made to declare the deputies incapable of being appointed ministers of the crown; and one of its advocates had spoken of Catiline as being among them. Mirabeau had encountered the proposal with straightforward opposition; he avowed his knowledge that it was aimed solely at himself; recommending instead a vote that the Count de Mirabeau, deputy for Aix, should be declared ineligible for the ministry: and for the time he succeeded in procuring the rejection of

the motion. But the boldness of the denunciation had been a warning to him that it was necessary for him to keep up his influence with the extreme revolutionary party as well inside as outside the assembly. And with this feeling, now, when Pétion wanted the courage expressly to name the great personages against whom he was hinting accusations, he rose and declared himself ready to do so, provided the Assembly would first vote a resolution that the inviolability which belonged to the king protected no one else whatever. It was an intimation that he was prepared to denounce the queen herself; and indeed he muttered her name between his teeth: but Mounier had influence enough to prevent any other motion from being formally made except one which Mirabeau subsequently proposed, that a deputation should be appointed to expostulate with the king on his recent reply to them concerning the Declaration of the Rights of Man, and to entreat his immediate assent to it. He would, he said, repeat the question put by the fool of Philip the Handsome to his master: "What would you do if, while you said yes, all the people said no?" And he easily carried his resolution, to which indeed the warmest adherents of the court did not venture to object.

But the intended remonstrance was never presented. The next day, before the members who were to compose the deputation could be selected, news reached the Assembly of occurrences at Paris which drove everything else from their minds. The warning, above three weeks old, that the 5th of October had been fixed for the intended attack on Versailles, had been so little heeded by the court that on the morning of that day Louis went to Meudon to shoot, and Marie Antoinette to the Trianon to visit her gardens. But it was true. Mirabeau himself remained at Versailles, but the agitators in Paris had not forgotten his crafty

admonition that the best or only chance of success for an insurrection lay in placing women at its head.* And accordingly, in obedience to it, at daybreak on the appointed morning a woman of notorious infamy of character moved towards the market-place beating a drum, and calling on all who heard to follow her. Plenty of followers had already been provided for her, the refuse of the streets, who, like herself, could neither fall lower nor fare worse; and among them one woman of notorious profligacy, and subsequently of ferocity equally notorious, who played so prominent a part in some of the later scenes of the Revolution that her name requires particular mention: Théroigne de Méricourt, known also as La Belle Liégeoise, burning to revenge on the whole body of aristocrats the injury done to her by one of their body; market-women and fish-women, in every city a masculine, sturdy, and fierce band; with them, and disguised to resemble them, other women who had grown rich by the personal favours of D'Orleans and his chief associates, and who were zealous for any movement which might invest him with additional means of gratifying their rapacity; and men, too, similarly apparelled, whose deep voices and the address with which they presently used the weapons which they procured, revealed their sex in spite of their attire. One man, Maillard, a ruffian who had been the most ferocious of the conquerors of the Bastille, disdained any disguise; they chose him for their leader, and under his guidance for an hour and more traversed the streets, mingling with their cries for bread horrid threats against the aristocrats and the queen, and gathering recruits every moment, till at last they conceived themselves strong enough once more to attack

* Louis Blanc, iii. 156, quoting the "Procédure du Châtelet."

the Hôtel de Ville. Its protection had been entrusted to a detachment of the national guard, who, however, had received no orders from their commander, Lafayette, and who, on the pretext that it was unworthy of a soldier to use force against a woman, fell back before them. In the hotel they found a large store of muskets and other weapons, and began to add to their former shouts and threats fresh cries announcing their resolution to hasten to Versailles.

No one attempted to prevent or even to delay their march. It was nearly ten o'clock, and the last of the gang had passed through the barrier almost an hour before, when Lafayette reached the Hôtel de Ville, and even then declined to take the responsibility of acting till he had received orders from the municipal council. Though destitute of any kind of ability, civil or military, Lafayette was, generally speaking, a man of personal courage, and even of integrity. But he exceeded even Necker in a thirst for popularity. And he was often perplexed how to reconcile the loyalty which he thought it decorous to profess with the republican principles which he entertained in his heart, and with his desire to gain or retain the affections of the populace. Throughout the day he made loud protestations of his fidelity to the laws, and to the king; but so timid, irresolute, and blundering was every part of his conduct, that they can only be believed at the cost of his reputation for common sense or even common courage. It was plain that his men did not believe them at all. On the contrary, their language to himself was that they did not believe him to be intentionally a traitor to them. While the municipal council was deliberating, they took upon themselves to declare their own intentions. They would go to Versailles and exterminate the

regiment of Flanders; they would bring the king back to Paris; if he were unfit to reign he might abdicate, and a regency might be appointed; and they were resolved that Lafayette should march at their head to assist in carrying out these designs. Lafayette had no inclination to take part in such an enterprise. He had no connexion with the Duke d'Orleans, and he was unwilling to co-operate with Mirabeau, who, as he well knew, was in the habit of speaking of him with contempt, and had nicknamed him a Grandison-Cromwell. But he had not courage to resist their demand; his vanity, his strongest feeling, was gratified by the desire his soldiers expressed to retain him as their commander; and at last he procured from the city magistrates an order authorizing him to comply with their demands, and to march to Versailles.

His professed object was to induce the king to comply willingly with the desires of the citizens, and to restrain any excesses to which the mob might be inclined to proceed; but the whole day had been wasted by his irresolution, and when he put his regiment in motion it was seven in the evening, full four hours after Maillard and his market-women had reached Versailles. The news of their approach had been brought to the palace before eleven o'clock by M. de Chinon, the son of the Duke de Richelieu, who at great personal risk had mingled with the crowd and marched some way with them to learn their purpose. He reported that even the women and children were armed, that the great majority were drunk, and that they were beguiling the way with the most ferocious threats; that they had been joined by a small gang of men who called themselves Coupetêtes, and boasted that they should now have abundant oppor-

tunity of earning the name.* The Count de St. Priest, the minister of the household, instantly took what means the time permitted to avert danger, though he derived but little assistance from the commander of the garrison, the Count d'Estaing, who seemed nearly as much bewildered as Lafayette. The queen came in in haste from the Trianon, which she was never destined to behold again; and an express was sent to warn the king of what had happened, and to beg him to return to the palace. Louis's first emotion was not fear for himself, or even for his family, but sympathy for the rioters, whom he did not suspect to be other than they seemed, and whose distress he did not doubt to be genuine. "Poor women!" he remarked, "do they not know that I would share my last crust with them?" The Count de St. Priest wished him to retire to Rambouillet, and the horses and carriages were for a long time kept in readiness. But he could not make up his mind. He continued repeating that it was a moment to think seriously; and it was of no avail that the queen replied that it was rather a crisis to act promptly. He would gladly have had the queen depart with the children, but she declared that her place was by his side; that, as the daughter of Maria Teresa, she did not fear death, and she positively refused to leave him. And in the evening, when he had been somewhat reassured by the cheers of a portion of the mob, he relinquished the idea altogether.

For before night he had held intercourse with some of them. On their first arrival at Versailles, they forced their way into the hall of the Assembly, where Mail-

* "Au milieu de ce bande infernale des hommes se vantaient d'avoir reçu le nom de Coupetêtes, et promettaient ne le mentir."—Madame de Staël, i. 344.

lard, as their spokesman, launched the most ferocious threats at the deputies if they hesitated to obey his orders. He declared that his followers were dying with hunger, though it was evident that the greater part of them were drunk; asserted that the nobles were using their wealth to intercept the citizens' bread, and, when pressed to say whom he accused of such a crime, ventured to name the Archbishop of Paris, known to all the world as the most charitable and munificent of churchmen; and finally he demanded that the assembly should send a deputation to the king to represent the distress of the people, and that a party of the women should accompany it. A strange scene ensued. Louis consented to receive the deputation, and the women, disorderly and ferocious as they had shown themselves in the assembly, were so awed by the magnificence of the royal palace, by the pomp of the nobles and attendants, and by finding themselves in the actual presence of royalty, that they could only summon up a few modest and humble words to utter their grievances and complaints of scarcity, while one, a young and pretty girl of seventeen, almost fainted.* One of the princesses brought her some water; she recovered; and as she knelt to kiss the king's hand, Louis kissed her himself; and, transported by his affability, she and her companions quitted the apartment, cheering the king and queen. That was not the impression which they had been intended to receive; and when they reached the streets, their new-born loyalty so exasperated their

* Count de Goltz, the Prussian ambassador at Paris, writing to Lord Auckland, says:—"Celle qui portait la parole au roi le soir du 5 est reconnue à présent pour une demoiselle galante, connue et frequentée par des gens connus. Que d'objets à réflexion!"—Auckland's Memoirs, ii. 363.

original comrades that the soldiers had some difficulty in saving them from their fury.

By this time the mob, which was increased by new arrivals every hour, had reached the court-yard of the palace; and being rendered more and more furious by its own violence, was louder than ever in its threats, the most sanguinary of which were directed against the queen. The Assembly was alarmed for itself as well as for the court. In the hope of allaying the tumult by the removal of at least one grievance, Mounier, not without some personal risk, crossed over to the palace, and prevailed on the king to give an immediate assent to the decrees of the Assembly which he had under consideration; and having returned, and from his president's chair announced the royal sanction to the declaration of the Rights of Man and the other articles, he proposed that the whole Assembly should repair to the palace to defend the king, or at least to unite their fortunes to his. Mirabeau resisted, and obtained the rejection of the proposal; but, as it was impossible to attempt to transact any business, Mounier himself went back with those who shared his views to give their personal support to their sovereign; but as night and darkness came on, it became every moment more difficult to preserve even the semblance of order. The Duke d'Orleans was seen in the crowd; one of his servants even ventured into the palace, and mingled with the king's attendants to learn the plans of the court, while his agents plied the mob with drink; and Mirabeau himself moved about actively, whispering to the soldiers, especially to those of the National Guard, and stimulating them to espouse what he called the cause of the people. He had but too great success. Presently a handful of ruffians, more drunk than their fellows, attacked a party

of the body-guard, and when they were easily beaten back, some of the national guard fired on the body-guard, and mortally wounded the commander of the detachment, the Marquis de Savonières. Reason was even seen to apprehend that the men of the regiment of Flanders would follow their example; and the officers of the body-guard applied themselves to posting their men carefully at every accessible point of the palace. The tumult grew worse rapidly; the mob began to pelt the guard with stones, venturing sometimes even to come to a hand-to-hand conflict with them, and to try and wrest their muskets from their hands. But even now the knowledge of the danger to which they were exposed could not induce Louis to lay aside his untimely scruples; and he sent down servants to reiterate his orders that they were to forbear to use their weapons, and to avoid bloodshed. "Tell the king," said M. l'Huillier, the officer to whom the command was delivered, "that his orders shall be obeyed, but that we shall all be assassinated." The mob grew fiercer when it became known that Lafayette and his regiment were approaching. No one knew what was his object, nor what course he might take; but the ringleaders of the mob saw the necessity of instant action. Guns were fired, heavy blows were dealt on the railings, and the danger seemed so imminent that they might force the gates, that the deputies themselves besought the king to quit the palace for Rambouillet; but he fancied that, as he had already pacified the party of women, so in the last extremity he should be able to pacify the rest. The queen, though it was obvious that she was in far greater peril, would not leave him; and the only precaution that either could be prevailed upon to take consisted in an order signed by the queen to keep the

horses harnessed and at the command of the Count de Luxemburg, in case the king's life should appear to be in danger; but she added, they were not to be used if the danger threatened only herself. It soon became impossible to use them, even had it been desired; for the populace of Versailles, fearing that the fury of the rioters would be exasperated, and perhaps turned against them if the royal family had escaped, forced their way into the stable-yard and unharnessed them.

At last, when it was nearly midnight, Lafayette arrived. With a singular perverseness of folly, when every moment was of consequence, he had halted his men a mile out of the town to make them a speech, and to administer to them an oath to be faithful to the nation, the law, and the king; an oath needless if they were inclined to keep it, utterly useless if they were not, and mischievous in its form, and in the order in which he ranged the powers to which he called on them thus to acknowledge their allegiance. Yet all would not bind themselves even to this obligation unconditionally; but the companies of the French guards who had set the example of mutiny in July exacted of him, as the condition of their compliance, that he should require the king to re-admit them into his service. At last he reached the palace. Leaving his men below, he mounted to the king's apartments, and, laying his hand on his heart, assured the king that he had no servant more devoted than himself. Louis was not given to sarcasm or innuendo; yet some of the bystanders fancied they perceived irony in the tone with which he expressed his belief in his officer's sincerity; and perhaps Lafayette was of the same opinion, for he began to dilate on the dangers to which he had been exposed in Paris in the morning. After

a long conversation with the king, and with Necker, who was as helpless as Louis himself, and deeply mortified at the indifference which all parties had shown to him, (the court had not taken his advice, the Assembly had never mentioned his name, the rioters had not even included him in their denunciations of the Government), Lafayette went down to announce to the guards that the king had acceded to their demands; and then returning assured the king and Mounier that contentment was restored, and that he himself would be responsible for the tranquillity of the night.

The royal family, exhausted by the fatigues of so terrible a day, retired to bed, the queen bidding her ladies follow her example. Fortunately they were too anxious for her safety to obey, and with their own attendants sat up in the room outside her bedchamber. But Lafayette, far more deeply responsible though he was, felt no such anxiety. He wrote a bombastic note to the civic magistrates of Paris, to give them notice that he had re-established tranquillity; and then, with a confidence in his own boasts which is not the least astonishing event of the day, went to sleep at a friend's house nearly a mile off.* Yet he knew that the crowd around the palace was not abated; though the night was wet and cold, none of the rioters sought any shelter, except occasionally such

* Lacretelle's expression is: "M. de Lafayette alla se retirer dans la maison du Prince de Poix, fort éloignée du château." But Dumas ("Memoirs," vol. i. p. 159) says he slept at the Hôtel de Noailles, which is "not a hundred paces from the iron gates of the Chapel." However, the nearer he was to the palace the more incomprehensible is it that he should not have reached it the next morning till nearly eight o'clock, or two hours after the rioters had forced their entrance into the Cour des Princes. Very few men in his position would have quitted the palace at all.

as was afforded by the wine-shops in the neighbourhood, where they inflamed their intoxication, and from which they soon returned to their comrades to renew their ferocious and menacing cries, seeking to increase the confusion by constant firing of muskets. Throughout the whole night the Duke d'Orleans was briskly going to and fro, probably with no exactly defined purpose beyond that of keeping up his interest with the rioters; when, just as day began to break, one of the gates leading into the Princes' court was perceived to be open. It had been entrusted to some of Lafayette's soldiers, and could not have been opened without treachery. The crowd poured in; there was nothing between them and the staircase which led to the royal apartments, except two gallant gentlemen, M. des Huttes and M. Moreau, the sentries of the detachment of the body-guard on duty, whose quarters were at the head of the staircase, in a saloon opposite to the queen's chamber. So dauntlessly did they stand to their posts, that for the moment the ruffians recoiled and shrank from attacking them, till D'Orleans advanced, waving them with his hand a sign to force their way in, and which direction to take. What then could two men effect against such a band? Des Huttes perished, pierced by a hundred pikes, and torn to pieces by his savage assailants. Moreau, with equal valour, but with better fortune, backed up the stairs, fighting so desperately that he gave his comrades time to barricade the doors of the queen's apartments, and to come to his assistance. As they drew him back, now terribly wounded, De Varicourt and Durépaire took his place. De Varicourt was soon slain: Durépaire, with prodigious strength and prowess, checked the assassins for some time, till he was reduced to helplessness by repeated wounds;

when he in his turn was replaced by Miomandre. He had equal devotion and intrepidity with his comrades; he could not have greater; and he had more presence of mind. Fighting furiously, but forced back by numbers, he was at last driven behind a doorway; he held his musket across it, and still kept his assailants at bay, while he shouted to the queen's ladies, now only separated from him by a single partition, to save the queen, for "the tigers with whom he was struggling were aiming at her life." In the annals of chivalry it had been recorded as the most brilliant feat of Bayard, that single-handed on a bridge of the Garigliano, he had for awhile stemmed the onset of two hundred Spaniards. Since his day many a dauntless knight had shed a lustre on the arms and glory of his country; but his gallantry and self-devotion had never been more faithfully copied or more nobly rivalled than it was on this morning of shame and danger by Miomandre and his heroic comrades; who were thus fighting without hope against those whom he truly called not men, but tigers. It was but a brief moment before he too was struck down, covered with wounds: but he had gained for the ladies a respite sufficient to secure the safety of his royal mistress. They roused her from bed, for her fatigue of the previous day had been so great that she had hitherto slept soundly through the uproar, and hurried her off to the king's apartment, who, having been just similarly awakened, had just quitted it to seek her; and in a few minutes the whole family was collected in safety in his anteroom; the body-guard having occupied the queen's bedroom, and the greater part of the mob having turned aside to pillage the armoury.

The rest of the palace was at the mercy of the rioters, who traversed the spacious and splendid

galleries and apartments, hacking and destroying; but seeking above all victims to murder who were happily safe from their fury. Meanwhile they lost one body of allies on whom they had reckoned, the French guards and the national guard. Lafayette, though intelligence of what was going on must have long since reached him, (if it had not, the neglect of precautions to require intelligence would show him almost more culpable,) had not come near the palace; but the Marquis de Vaudreuil, who with several other nobles had hastened to the palace on hearing of the assault which was being made on it, took on himself the duty that belonged to the general, and heedless of personal danger descended to the court to expostulate with the soldiers for making themselves accomplices of such a gang of brigands. At first, out of mere shame, they attempted to justify themselves. "They were told," they replied, "that the body guard were the aggressors; that they had attacked the people." "Do you pretend to believe," said the gallant marquis, "that a couple of hundred men have been fools enough to attack thirty thousand?" The argument was irresistible; they declared that if the body guard would mount the national cockade they would look on them as brothers; and sprang up the palace stairs to the guard-room to seek them, or, as they said, to save them. As there were no new cockades at hand, the two corps exchanged schakos, sashes, and sometimes arms; and the reconciliation had not been made too soon. For the mob grew more and more bloodthirsty; they had found the bodies of the two guards who had been slain in the conflict of the night before, and brought them under the king's windows, where one of the Coupetêtes, a ruffian named Jourdan, cut off their heads, and

stuck them on two pikes. And presently, having fallen in with three of the corps, they were dragging them to the same spot to murder them before the king's eyes, when the soldiers upstairs, who had just exchanged vows of brotherhood with their comrades, seeing their danger, sprang down to their rescue: "For we'll save," said they, "the body-guard who saved us at Fontenoy."* They charged the assassins, and brought off the body-guards unhurt, though ropes were already round their necks.

At last Lafayette himself arrived, just in time to save another party whom the mob had seized, and who were in similar danger. Baulked of their expected prey, the assassins grew more furious; firing in their wrath useless shots against the walls of the palace, and shouting for the queen to show herself.

She with her children was still in the king's apartment, where the princesses his sisters, the ministers, and a few of the courtiers were also assembled. The king, though indifferent to his own danger, was too perplexed and irresolute to give directions. Necker, in an agony of terror and distress, sat with his face buried in his hands unable even to offer advice. She alone was undaunted, or at least if in the depths of her woman's heart she felt terror at the sanguinary and obscene threats of her ruffianly enemies, she scorned to show it. When the firing began M. de la Luzerne, the minister of marine, had quietly placed himself between her and the window; but, while she thanked him for his devotion, she desired him to retire, saying with her habitually gracious courtesy that the king could not afford to have so faithful a servant endangered; and now holding her little son

* See vol. iii. c. xxvi.

and daughter one in each hand, she stepped out on the balcony to confront those who were shouting for her destruction. "No children!" was their cry; she led them back into the room, and returning stood before them alone, with arms crossed, and eyes looking up to heaven as one who expected instant death. Even those ruthless miscreants were awed by her sublime magnanimity. Not a shot was fired at her; but they began to raise a new shout which embodied the original object with which all, except those in the inmost confidence of the Duke d'Orleans, had first marched on Versailles: "To Paris!" was now the cry; and Lafayette urged the king to comply with the wish so expressed. Had the king been ever so sincere in his declaration of confidence in the marquis's loyalty the night before, he must have learnt to qualify that opinion since. But in truth he had now no alternative. It was evident that the rioters had the power of enforcing compliance with their demand. He therefore authorized Lafayette to promise that he would do as they wished; and after the general had given the mob the assurance required, he himself with the queen went forth into the balcony to repeat it.

Soon after midday he set out with the queen, his brother and sister, the Count de Provence and the Princess Elizabeth, and his children. It was a shameful and strange retinue that escorted the King of France to his capital. One party of the rioters, with Maillard and Jourdan at their head, had started two hours before, bearing aloft in triumph the heads of the mangled body-guards, and combining such hideous mockery with their barbarity that they halted at Sèvres to compel a barber to dress the hair on the lifeless skulls. And now the royal carriage was sur-

rounded with a vast and confused medley; market-women and the rest of the female rabble, the ruffians who had stormed the palace, bearing loaves of bread on their pike-heads, and singing ribald songs, or shouting out that all would now have bread enough, since they were bringing the baker, the bakeress, and the baker's boy* to Paris; the French guards, national guards, and body-guards, many of the latter still bleeding from wounds received in the tumult, with a train of carriages conveying a hundred members of the Assembly. When first the mob made itself master of the palace, Mounier had repeated his proposal of the previous evening that the whole assembly should join the king as his guards, now that his proper body-guards were being slaughtered; and Mirabeau had successfully renewed his opposition to the motion, daring to speak of the dangers that surrounded the court as imaginary, and arguing that it was not consistent with the dignity and independence of the members to leave their own hall. But when it became known that the king was about to quit Versailles for Paris, he himself proposed a resolution that the Assembly was inseparable from the king's person, and that therefore a deputation should attend him on his journey, while the rest prepared to follow. But if the presence of the deputation was intended to prove a protection to the captive sovereigns it had nearly failed of its effect; for a shot was fired at the royal carriage, though fortunately it missed its aim and no one was injured. So vast and disorderly was the train that it was nine at night before it reached Paris. Bailly received the royal carriages at the barrier, and resuming the tone

* "Le boulanger, la boulangère, et le petit mitron" (the dauphin).

of coarse insult which he had employed to the king on his former visit to the city, had the effrontery to speak of a day so full of horror to every one, and of humiliation and agony to those whom he was addressing, as a glorious day. Louis disdained to notice the insolence, and briefly answered that it was always with pleasure and with confidence that he found himself among the inhabitants of his good city of Paris. He then proceeded to the Hôtel de Ville where the council of civic magistrates was awaiting his arrival; and where the president of that body also addressed him, not however in language like that of Bailly, but as an "adored father, who came to visit the place where he could meet the greatest number of his children." And it seemed as if Bailly himself had become ashamed of his arrogant rudeness; for when Louis had desired him, in reply to the president's address, to repeat the answer which he had made him at the barrier, he, in some confusion, merely said that the king had come with pleasure among the Parisians. "The king, sir," interrupted the queen, "added 'and with confidence.'" "Gentlemen," said Bailly, "you hear her majesty's words; you are happier in doing so than if I myself had uttered them."* The whole company burst out into one rapturous cheer. At their request the king and queen showed themselves at the windows for a few minutes, when the whole populace in the square re-echoed their acclamations with enthusiasm; and then the royal family quitting the town hall drove to the Tuilleries, where their attendants had been hastily making such preparations as a few hours permitted for their reception.

* Marie Antoinette, &c., No. 163; a letter from Mme. Elizabeth giving a graphic account of the events of the 5th and 6th.

As the king was mounting the stairs at the Hôtel de Ville, Lafayette, who accompanied him, had urged him to declare that he had come to establish his constant residence at Paris. But Louis refused to make such an avowal, which might easily have been construed as a promise, alleging that he had not yet made up his mind on the subject. And, apart from his preference for Versailles and its neighbourhood, he might reasonably have felt disinclined to fix himself permanently in the Tuilleries, which had been long disused as a royal residence; of which the furniture had become so shabby as to attract even the notice of the little dauphin;* and which had not a sufficient number of rooms in repair to afford accommodation for the necessary attendants of the court. But after a few days the fear, if he should propose to return to Versailles, of perhaps being met by an opposition on the part of the Assembly or the civic authorities which he might be unable to surmount, or, if he did return thither, of his prolonged absence from the city furnishing a pretext for the repetition of the recent outrages, caused him to send a letter to the Assembly announcing that he had determined on making Paris his principal abode. He gave orders for the removal of furniture and the queen's library from Versailles; and with something of the apathy of despair began to reconcile himself to his new abode and his changed position.

* Étonné de l'obscurité répandue dans une demeure qui n'attendait pas ses hôtes, l'enfant royal dit à sa mère: 'Tout est ici bien laid, maman.' 'Mon fils,' répondit Marie Antoinette, 'Louis XIV y logeait bien!' "—Louis Blanc, quoting Weber, iii. 228.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

For though looking back, as the present generation can, on the course of events which followed the occurrences that have just been related, we may not say that the revolution was completed, those who had just beheld them could not avoid seeing that they were the consummation of a revolution such as, no further back than the beginning of the year, no man alive could have contemplated. Six months before Louis had been an absolute sovereign; now, if authority of any sort, if even personal freedom was a necessary ingredient in sovereignty, to call him by such a title at all was an unmeaning compliment, after treason had stormed his palace, slaughtered his guards, and after he himself had been compelled to pardon the traitors and assassins, and moreover to quit the home of his choice, and take up his abode amongst those very men of whom he could not be sure that they had renounced their designs against his life. If he had sought to blind himself to the character of the insurrection by which he had been thus overpowered as if it had been a sudden, unpremeditated outbreak, as speedily repented of, he must have been undeceived by the changed demeanour of the citizens. The admiring awe with which they had been wont to gaze on Louis XIV. even in his hour of defeat, the outward show of reverence with which they had bowed before even the last king, vile as they knew

him to be, was gone; they showed that they felt that they themselves had now become the masters. The morning after the arrival of the royal family the whole rabble of the city, some of the most savage of the rioters being conspicuous among them, crowded under the windows of the Tuilleries, insisting that the king and queen should show themselves; and when they did appear accosting them with insolent familiarity, often especially reproaching the queen, and at times even mingling atrocious threats* with their expressions of distrust of her future intentions. She bore these trying scenes with a dignity and temper which disarmed them of some portion of sting; and when occasion served, with a tact which changed their enmity into temporary goodwill. One woman addressed her in German. "Speak French," she replied, "I have become so purely French as to have forgotten my native language." The crowd clapped and cheered lustily. They begged the ribbons and flowers from off her bonnet, which she gave them, and they eagerly divided them, tearing them into small portions that each might have a memorial of her, "their good queen," as they now called her.

It was a favorable change from the disposition which not twenty-four hours before had led them to threaten, with hideous imprecations, to cut her skin

* Even Louis Blanc admits this. "Les dames de la halle présentées à Marie Antoinette, elles osaient lui recommander dans leur langage trivial et naïf de se mieux conduire à l'avenir . . . sinon . . . Ici des menaces qui ne peuvent être rapportées."—iii. 229, Madame de Campan, c. xv. The queen herself was on the whole satisfied with the behaviour of the citizens on the morning of the 7th. She writes in the evening to Count Mercy, the Austrian ambassador: "En oubliant où nous sommes et comment nous y sommes arrivés nous devons être contents du mouvement du peuple, surtout ce matin . . . . Je parle au peuple, milices, poissardes, tous me tendent la main. Je la leur donne," &c. &c.—See the whole letter, "Marie Antoinette," &c., No. 159.

into ribbons.* But though for the sake of her husband and children Marie Antoinette thus condescended to the mob whose good-humour was as insolent as their enmity, it did not deceive her as to the character of the scenes she had just gone through, or of her present situation, or of her future prospects. When preparing to quit Versailles she had revealed her feelings to her attached waiting-woman, Madame de Campan. "The king and she were being dragged away, perhaps to death; a fate from which monarchs in captivity are never far distant."† And from the day she entered the Tuilleries she looked on her eventual preservation as almost hopeless. Her chief anxiety was in any crisis that might come upon her not to be wanting to herself, to her royal dignity, and to the example of her illustrious mother; her chief labour was to animate the king, and inspire him with a courage and energy like her own; her only comfort to watch over her children, and especially to superintend the education of the little dauphin, a child of singular promise, an occupation which even in her gayest hours at Versailles she had looked on as a duty never to be neglected, and to which she had devoted herself, not only with tenderness, but with a singular appreciation of every indication of character, and a resolute impartiality which never blinded her to their faults, which does as much honour to her judgment as to her affection.‡

* The threat is recorded by Louis Blanc himself, quoting the deposition of Bernardy. "Nous voulons le peau de la reine pour en faire des rubans de districts."—iii. 211.

† "Nous sommes perdus; entraînés peut-être à la mort; les rois prisonniers en sont bien près."—Madame de Campan, c. xv.

‡ See the collection of M. Feuillet de Conches, Letter 147, to Madame de Tourzel, their governess, from which I subjoin one or two extracts. "Il (le dauphin) est comme tous les enfants forts et bien portants, très étourdi, très leger et violent dans ses colères; mais il est bon enfant, tendre et

It was more unfortunate that many of the most sincere adherents of the crown, and many also of that moderate party who, being honestly anxious for such a reform of the government as should establish the principles of a carefully marked out constitution, were also convinced that under no sovereign could measures be more honestly planned or more fairly carried out, took the same view as the queen of the present state of affairs; but were led by it to an exactly opposite judgment of the course which it became them to pursue. Like her, they now looked on the king as by the late events laid at the mercy of his enemies, and reduced to a state of utter helplessness for the future; and the nation as having entered on a downward path, along which each day would accelerate its progress, while no one could discern in what mischiefs it might finally terminate. But the conclusion to which these forebodings led them was, not that they should strive by resolution and perseverance to avert the evils which they foreboded, but that while there was still time they should save themselves by flight. Those who had the greatest justification for their emigration were the body-guards who had been saved with such difficulty at Versailles.

caressant même quand son étourderie ne l'emporte pas. . . . Il est d'une grande fidélité quand il a promis une chose; mais il est très indiscret; il répéte aisément ce qu'il a entendu dire, et souvent, sans vouloir mentir, il y ajoute ce que son imagination lui a fait voir. C'est son plus grand défaut, et sur lequel il faut bien le corriger.... Avec de la sensibilité et en même temps de la fermeté sans être trop sévère on fera toujours de lui ce qu'on voudra. . . . On a toujours accoutumé mes enfants à avoir grande confiance en moi; et quand ils ont eu des torts à me le dire eux-mêmes. Cela fait qu'en les grondant, j'ai l'air plus peinée et affligée de ce qu'ils ont fait que fâchée. Je les ai accoutumés tous à ce que un oui ou un non prononcé par moi est irrévocable; mais je leur en donne toujours une raison à la portée de leurs ages; pourqu'ils ne pussent croire que c'est humeur de ma part." The most conscientious and judicious English mother could hardly describe her children more fairly, or lay down better rules for their management.

After that fatal day Louis with a sad heart disbanded them; and though the civic magistracy of Paris, pitying his humiliation, or perhaps thinking the dismissal of such a force too public an evidence of the subjection to which they had reduced him, entreated him to restore them; yet when he had complied, the demagogues in the Assembly denounced the recall and the guards themselves in such furious language that he was forced a second time to discharge them. When they quitted the kingdom, as most of them did, they could at least allege with some plausibility that they were removed from the employment in which alone they could defend their king, and that there were no men so marked out for destruction as themselves on account of their former service. But there were others who did certainly not as yet seem to be in personal danger, and whose means of serving their king and country did not depend on the prowess of their arms, or the power of resisting force by force, but whose strength lay in their wisdom and eloquence. Such were the leaders of the moderate or constitutional party in the Assembly, Mounier, Lally-Tollendal, and the Bishop of Langrès, who could not justly complain that, except in moments of extraordinary excitement, their influence was overborne, and who nevertheless now yielded to an infectious panic. They resigned their seats, and after a short time quitted the country; and to such an extent was their example followed, that before the end of the year more than 300 deputies withdrew from the Assembly. They salved over to themselves the dereliction of the duties which a few months before they had voluntarily and eagerly sought, by true and forcible denunciations of the crimes which they had been powerless to avert;* but did not see that by the

* Lally Tollendal justified his retreat in an elaborate letter of which Lacretelle, vii. 255, quotes nearly all. A few sentences express his notion

course they now adopted, by leaving the undisputed sway in the Assembly to the authors of the past outrages, they were ensuring the repetition of such crimes, rendering inevitable the evils they most deprecated, and securing the verification of Mirabeau's boast, that henceforth the progress of the Revolution would be more rapid than ever. They were, in fact, ensuring the ruin of all that they wished most to preserve; for if at a later period there were, as will appear, brief intervals of moderation, when the voice of truth, and reason, and humanity might have had a chance of making itself heard, and arresting the downward march of the Revolution, it was to their withdrawal alone that it was owing that that voice was silent. Certainly if the Roman general deserved the gratitude of his country because he did not despair of her safety when she seemed lying prostrate at the feet of a foreign conqueror, much more was it the duty at this period of every true Frenchman to struggle to the last against domestic enemies, who were indeed more dangerous than foreign invaders; who were indeed as yet triumphant, but who could not as yet be said to have gained a victory so over-

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of the events which have just been related. "Il était au-dessus de mes forces de supporter plus longtemps l'horreur que me causaient ce sang, ces têtes, cette reine *presqu'égorgée*, ce roi amèné esclave entrant à Paris au milieu de ses assassins, et précédé des têtes de ces malheureux gardes; ces perfides Janissaires, ces assassins, ces femmes cannibales, ce cri de *tous les évêques à la lanterne!* . . . . M. Bailly appelant cela un beau jour. . . . M. Mirabeau disant impunément dans cette assemblée que le vaisseau de l'état, bien loin d'être arrêté dans sa course, s'élancerait avec plus de rapidité que jamais vers sa régénération; M. Barnave riant avec lui quand les flots de sang coulaient autour de nous; le vertueux Mounier échappant comme par miracle à vingt assassins qui avaient voulu faire de sa tête un trophée de plus. Voilà ce qui me fit jurer de ne plus mettre le pied dans cette caverne *d'anthropophages*, où je n'avais plus la force d'élever la voix, où depuis six semaines je l'avais élevée en vain, moi, Mounier, et tous les honnêtes gens."

whelming as to make further resistance hopeless; nay, who, by the very use they had made and were making of their success, were endangering its permanence. The next year had scarcely opened when, of the party that had hitherto opposed the crown, several of the members most distinguished for ability and high character, such as Malouet and Clermont Tonnerre, crossed over to the right side of the Assembly, and devoted all their subsequent exertions to counteract their former rashness. And even before the end of this same month of October a reaction began which, if Mounier and his friends had still been in their places to take advantage of the improved state of feeling, might even now have led to the restoration of order, to the permanent securing of the supremacy of the law, and to the establishment of a well-balanced constitution.

Little as had been the service, if any, which Lafayette had rendered to the Government on the 5th and 6th of October, the result of those days had been sufficiently disappointing to the hopes of D'Orleans and his party to exasperate them against him. The late occurrences had had one effect which as yet the duke did not suspect, that of deciding Mirabeau to abandon him; for though a little before Mirabeau had said, without much disguise, that if the king should be deposed a prince of mature age would be a better successor to him than a child of four years old, he had been so disgusted by the irresolution which the duke had shown when, in his opinion, the prize which he sought was within his grasp, that he decided that even the dauphin would make a better king than he. The duke, he said, was a coward, with the appetite for crime but not the courage to execute it. And, anticipating Malouet and Clermont Tonnerre,

from this time he began to prepare the way for reconciling himself to the king; seeing the best chance for the nation in maintaining him on the throne, as a prince who would never be stubborn in resisting the limitations which a well-regulated constitution would place on his authority, and whose good faith might be thoroughly relied on for adhering to any to which he had once consented; and the best chance for himself in making himself so indispensable to him that it might at any moment be in his power to become minister. He did not, indeed, at first follow out this plan with entire consistency and steadiness. More than once during the next nine months his speeches were incompatible with it; his actions, the measures which he promoted, or in which he acquiesced, were calculated to render it impracticable. It may be that he proposed to raise the price of his friendship by showing how formidable and mischievous was his enmity: it may be that he occasionally wavered in his view of his personal interest. But D'Orleans had no suspicion of the change that had taken place in his opinions, and thought that the residence of the king in Paris had placed him more in his power, provided he could get rid of Lafayette. In those days no plot was kept secret long. The marquis learnt that he was contriving his assassination, and openly charged him with the design;* only forbearing to impeach him in legal form on condition of his at once quitting the kingdom. The ministers were willing to afford a plea for his departure by giving him a mission to England, in which he was of course to do nothing. The duke acquiesced in this honorary exile; and on

* "Lord Auckland's Memoirs," ii. 365, where the whole scene is related in a letter from M. Huber, a Genevese confidant of Necker in Paris at this time.

the 14th of October quitted Paris. Mirabeau's contempt for him was completed by this submission, against which he remonstrated vigorously, but in vain; and the same evening he gave the first indication of a schism between himself and the Extreme Left, by proposing a martial law, imitated, as he avowed, from the English Riot Act; and providing that whenever the magistrates of any town considered the public peace to be endangered by a mob, they might hoist a red flag, and if the rioters did not at once disperse they might employ armed force to disperse them and to restore tranquillity. He added a provision to which, though perfectly unobjectionable, there is nothing analogous in the British law, that the mob, while dispersing, should be allowed to depute six individuals to state to the magistrates the grievance which had excited their discontent.

The enactment was vehemently resisted by those against whose machinations it was aimed: by the Lameths; by Robespierre, diligently training himself by continual practice as a speaker; and by Buzot, a young man who afterwards became a prominent member of the Girondist party. The debate was adjourned, and before any decision was taken on the question, a fresh outrage supplied an additional argument in its favour. The scarcity of bread continued; and the agents of disorder profited by it to excite the populace against the bakers. On the 19th a mob stormed several of their shops, and though the national guard rescued the greater part of the men from its fury, one unhappy man, named François, was left in the hands of the rioters. They murdered him; with the ferocity which now distinguished all their outrages, they tore his body to pieces, and carried his head in triumph through the streets to the Hôtel de

Ville, and to the hall where the Assembly was sitting; and meeting the wife of their victim, who when he was first carried off had fled in a frantic state to implore the aid of the magistrates or officers to save her husband, with a pitiless inhumanity which exceeded the foulest deed that had yet been perpetrated, compelled her to kiss the scarcely cold lips, and left her fainting on the pavement covered with his blood. The indignation of the better class of citizens was universal. Lafayette, with a company of the guard, dispersed the mob, and seized the ruffian who had the head of François on his pike. He was tried and hung the next day; and the municipal magistrates themselves now besought the Assembly to pass the proposed law, or any other which might prevent the recurrence of such atrocities. Lafayette supported Mirabeau; the law was passed: and on more than one occasion within the next few weeks Lafayette showed his resolution not to suffer it to be a dead letter; but with his soldiers came to the aid of the civil power, and inflicted summary punishment on gangs of miscreants whose idea of reform was a state of things which should afford impunity to crime. Yet, while thus acting, neither the orator nor the general were willing to break wholly with the very mob which they were discountenancing. The one wished to keep it formidable, that in his own hands it might become, as it had been before, an instrument of power. The other could not altogether discard his republican theories, and still less his thirst for popularity among even the lowest classes. And with these feelings Mirabeau encouraged a set of wretches, still worse, if possible, than open murderers, to harass the aristocratical party with false accusations; publicly avowing that the

trade of an informer though base under a tyrannical government was laudable in a free State: and Lafayette proclaimed in the Assembly itself that when a people is oppressed insurrection is the holiest of duties.

Mirabeau's maxim soon received a sad practical commentary. The Assembly had created a new crime, to which they gave the name of treason* against the nation; without defining it, or specifying how it should be proved. The law was considered to have a retrospective operation, and accordingly in November the Baron de Besenval was impeached under it before the Châtelet, the only one of the old tribunals which was still permitted to exercise its functions, for having offended its provisions by his conduct during the riots of July. He could easily have justified it; for he had received, and still held in his possession, an order signed by the king himself, which ordered him to suppress the disturbances by force if necessary. But with a chivalry worthy of the best days of the French nobility, he refused to allow his counsel to produce a document which might have tended to exasperate any party against the king. However, the notorious facts of the case were a sufficient justification; and he was acquitted. But his escape was fatal to the person who next was brought before the same tribunal. The Marquis de Favras was a nobleman of high character and considerable abilities; zealously attached to the king, and believed also to stand high in the confidence of the Count de Provence, who employed him as his agent in some financial transactions, and, as he was poor, aided him at times with loans or presents. His very inoffen-

* Lèse-nation.

siveness marked him out to the leaders of the Left as one whose death might strike additional terror into the court. And, as the rewards offered by the Assembly for the discovery of traitors had warmed into existence a whole swarm of informers, it was easy to bribe some of them to make the marquis the subject of an accusation. Its tenor was not only monstrous, but ridiculous. It affirmed that De Favras was occupied in raising an army of thirty thousand men, with the design of carrying off the king from Paris, dissolving the Assembly, and putting Lafayette and Bailly to death. When he was arrested, the whole of the money found on his person and in his house only amounted to a hundred louis; a circumstance which alone was sufficient to prove the absurdity of the charge brought against him. It broke down also on every other point. The Count de Provence himself appeared as a witness in his favour, and gave a clear explanation of the transactions in which he had employed him; and the prisoner's own defence, which was lucid and eloquent, amply demonstrated his innocence to the satisfaction of his judges. But it was not a question of guilt or innocence. The populace, already disappointed by the acquittal of De Besenval, were furious at the idea of a second victim escaping; and disturbed the court with vociferous demands for his condemnation, and with threats to the judges themselves if they should let him escape. They had the baseness to yield. They professed indeed to fear not so much for themselves, as for the general tranquillity; and one of them had even the effrontery to acknowledge his innocence to the prisoner himself, and to affirm that his life was a necessary sacrifice to the public peace. He went to the scaffold with fearless dignity, with his last breath declaring the false-

hood of the evidence which had been brought against him. His execution had the effect intended of causing deep grief to the king and queen, who, though they knew that his real crime was his attachment to them, were unable to save him, and could only show their sympathy for his fate by sending kind messages and presents to his widow.* But it had another effect which its authors had not anticipated nor desired, in so shocking the Assembly, or rather alarming the majority of the deputies for themselves, since none could be more innocent than Favras, nor safe from such arts as those which had destroyed him, that thenceforth they discountenanced informations, and preferred to let their own law remain in abeyance rather than to make it a pretext for more judicial murders. They even subsequently refused to prosecute the authors of the attack on Versailles, though an investigation into its causes had been commenced, and scores of witnesses were being examined whose testimony left no doubt of the active part taken in it by the Duke d'Orleans and his partisans, and especially by Mirabeau. Those who first set the investigation on foot hoped to have procured the testimony of the queen herself: but they appealed in vain to her indignation and to her pride. No denunciation of those who, whatever had been their crimes, were still the subjects of her husband, could in her eyes be becoming to a queen. And when those who would have made a tool of her to crush their political rivals, urged that no evidence could be so conclusive as hers, since no one had seen so much of what had taken place, or had had a better opportunity of identifying the guilty, her reply was a dignified and magnani-

* Madame de Campan, c. xvi.

mous pardon of the outrages beneath which she had so nearly perished. "I have seen everything, I have known everything, I have forgotten everything." And the great criminal of all, Mirabeau, was but the more encouraged to make atonement for his offences against a mistress of so royal a spirit.

But while the Assembly was thus showing an inclination to mercy in matters of life and death, it proceeded not the less steadily in its demolition of institutions. The removal to Paris had been as fatal to its independence as to that of the king, since it was now ever at the mercy of the Parisian mob, and also of the formidable body which ruled the mob. A large riding-school close to the garden of the Tuileries had been fitted up for its accommodation, and just behind it in the Rue St. Honoré was an old convent of Jacobin or Dominican friars, the library of which in former days had been the council-room of the League. The Breton Club now procured it for their meetings, changing their designation to that of the Jacobin Club, and no longer limiting the right of membership to deputies, but admitting every one who by application for admission avowed his adherence to its maxims. The first victim of the Assembly in its new abode was the church; and the priest who smote the victim was one of its own brotherhood, Talleyrand, bishop of Autun.

The State's need of money became every day more pressing, and this unworthy prelate did not hesitate to put into form a proposal of which a hint had already been given when Necker made his financial statement in August. He saw, he declared, no other remedy but in seizing the whole property of the church. He valued it, and his estimate fell short of that which had been made by others, and probably of

the truth,* at two thousand millions of livres; and he proposed a resolution that the whole belonged to the State, as a preliminary to seizing it; and the substitution of a small fixed payment to all who were really working clergy. Mirabeau supported him with great vigour; Maury and Sièyes, who never allowed his political theories to blind him to his personal interests, opposed him with equal energy and better founded reasoning; but the vast amount of the wealth to be obtained by the confiscation, and of the consequent relief to the revenue, was the most decisive of all arguments; and on the 2nd of November the resolution was carried by a majority of 217. Nearly 250 members, however, were absent, with Mounier and Lally; and as the very reason of their absence proves that they would have been found on the side of Maury, they would have been sufficient to change the minority into a majority, and must thus have seen, in the very first month of their withdrawal, a decisive condemnation of their conduct.

It did not, however, induce them to return; and on the next important measure which was passed by the Assembly, Sièyes reunited himself to the party which, on the question of the church, he had deserted. He could not afford to separate himself from them long, for the Jacobin Club itself was beginning to be divided into parties. The Lameths and Barnave were denouncing many of their colleagues as lukewarm in their revolutionary principles; and it was becoming daily more and more manifest that any one

* Necker estimated the yearly income at 130 millions of livres, which at twenty years' purchase would considerably exceed Talleyrand's valuation. Others rated it higher still; some writers affirmed that they possessed a third of the kingdom; while others went beyond that, and declared them owners of half.—Arthur Young, p. 542.

who would acquire or retain influence in the club and in the city must exculpate himself from such an accusation. Legislation, as the Jacobins looked upon it, was but a race of violence and destruction. And to show his fitness to be a competitor in such a contest, Sièyes towards the end of the year brought forward a measure which was not inconsistent with his love of abstract theories and symmetrical systems; but which was of the most bold and sweeping character, attacking the most inveterate prejudices, many of the best feelings, and in countless cases the important interests also of the people in every nook and corner of the country. Hitherto France had been divided into thirty-two provinces, whose names marked the gradual growth of the kingdom. The majority had, of course, belonged to the ancient monarchy; but others of great importance had been comparatively recent acquisitions, and there were men still living who could remember when the last, Lorraine, had ceased to be a separate principality. Many were distinguished by peculiar customs, privileges, and laws, to which the inhabitants had clung with a patriotic affection as connected with glorious recollections of days gone by, and as the memorials of their ancient independence. There were manifest inconveniences in such an arrangement; which, however, were as usual not without their compensations. In the eyes of ruling statesmen it was no trifling advantage that it animated and strengthened the patriotism of the great bulk of the people, supplying, as it were, an additional tie by which to bind them to the crown. A Breton or a Burgundian was not a less loyal subject of the king now because he could trace a day when the dukes of Brittany or Burgundy had been practically independent sovereigns; while to his enthu-

siasm for France as a whole he added an almost equal affection for and pride in his native province. In the eyes of those who wished to limit the authority of their rulers and to prevent the Government from becoming a pure despotism, it was of inestimable value as furnishing means for resisting the encroachments of the crown; and our readers have seen more than one instance in which the illegal usurpations and unauthorized exercises of the kingly prerogative which had been acquiesced in by the Parisian Parliament, were resisted and baffled by the provincial States.

The abolition of the system was not a new idea. It had been recommended by the Economists of the last reign,* with whom, (such was their contempt for all ancient institutions, and such their conceit of their own genius for improvement,) the mere fact of the existence of any plan was an argument for altering it. But it had never been contemplated by any minister. Those who had not had too much wisdom to meddle with the arrangement existing had had too little energy; since it was plain that to introduce any change without the deepest shock to the feelings of the provincials, and the most flagrant injustice to existing interests, must be a task requiring a most minute and protracted investigation, and altogether the greatest care and labour, the most distinguished prudence and ad-

* "L'un d'eux [des Économistes] propose d'effacer à la fois toutes les anciennes divisions territoriales et de changer tous les noms des provinces, quarante ans avant que l'Assemblée Constituante l'exécute."—"L'Ancien Régime," p. 235. De Tocqueville has said just before: "Le passé est pour les Économistes l'objet d'un mépris sans bornes. 'La nation est gouvernée depuis des siècles par des faux principes; tout semble d'y avoir été fait au hasard,' dit Letronne. Partant de cette idée, ils se mettent à l'œuvre; il n'y a pas d'institution si vieille et qui paraisse si bien fondée dans notre histoire, dont ils ne demandent l'abolition pour peu qu'elle incommode et nuise à la symmétrie de leurs plans."—"L'Ancien Régime," 235.

dress. But care and labour, delicacy and management, respect for the past, or regard for the feelings or rights of others, were alike distasteful to the majority of the Assembly. Though many animated debates took place on the subject, it does not appear that a single deputy raised a doubt as to the main question whether it was expedient at one blow to alter the whole system of administration throughout the kingdom, to extinguish the privileges and laws, the old landmarks, and even the names of the provinces. The discussions turned almost wholly on points of detail, some of which were not unlike the questions which are agitated in our own Parliament at the present day; but in which it is remarkable that no statistics such as our legislators rightly think indispensable for the decision of such questions, were brought forward or asked for on any side.* One of the chief objects of the new division into departments which was to be substituted for the old arrangement of provinces was to systematize the election of deputies to future National Assemblies; and with reference to this Mirabeau exposed with great force the absurdities of the abbé's plan, which was based solely on the territorial extent of each division, without the least regard to its character, or to the number of inhabitants contained in it. He argued truly that population was an element of far greater consequence than the mere number of square miles or acres; but he could adduce no trustworthy estimate either of the gross population or of the classes of which it was composed to enable him to correct the plan on sounder principles; and conse-

* De Tocqueville gives us a curious explanation of the way in which, a few years before, the Government had endeavoured to estimate the population of a canton. The clergy made a return of the number of communicants at Easter; on that basis a rough estimate was framed of the

quently the amendments which he proposed were no better conceived than the original proposal. Camille Desmoulins was another objector. He disapproved of any qualification whatever being required for either voters or representatives, though all that was exacted from the first was the payment of a tax which hardly amounted to two shillings a year, and from the second one of about two pounds. But his demand of universal suffrage found few supporters, and as Mirabeau showed little earnestness in pressing his amendments, the law was passed very nearly in accordance with the original draft. The kingdom was divided into eighty-three departments, which were again subdivided into districts, and the districts into cantons. The number of representatives to be returned was fixed at 745, or as nearly as possible nine for each department. There were other parts of the arrangement ostensibly intended to facilitate the management of the local affairs, and especially the administration of justice; but in reality designed, in at least an equal degree, to wrest the whole executive authority of the kingdom from the crown and to vest it in the people. Every department was to have an executive council, an administrative council, and a criminal tribunal; every district a civil tribunal; and all the councillors and all the judges, who, together, amounted to many thousands, were to be appointed by popular election; the entire system of governors, lieutenant-governors, and intendants nominated by the crown being swept away. The whole matter from its first contemplation to its final enactment by the Assembly

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number of children and of invalids, and the three items added together were supposed to give the total amount of the population.—"L'Ancien Régime," p. 197.

did not take seven weeks,* while a single night sufficed for another measure, which was indeed a natural consequence of the first, but which might have been thought still more antagonistic to the national prejudices, the abolition of the Parliaments. Duport, to whom it first occurred, being himself a lawyer was ashamed to appear in person in the destruction of these ancient bodies, and stimulated his friend Alexandre Lameth to make the necessary motion. Those who, under the idea that the Parliament might hereafter prove a check on the Assembly, would gladly have resisted it, Malouet, Clermont Tonnerre, and their party, now rapidly decreasing, thought it more politic, because more likely to succeed, to concentrate their efforts on the object of preserving to the king the nomination of the tribunals which were to be substituted for them; but even in this attempt they were disappointed, and the Assembly not only refused the king this power, but a few weeks later took from him even that power of revision of the sentences of those tribunals which consisted of pardoning or softening the punishment of those who might have been condemned.

But the nation at large did not everywhere look upon these sweeping changes with the same indifference as the Assembly. Those who brought them forward calculated probably on the provincials being

* The precipitation with which all this was done strikes Quinet as even more extraordinary than the greatness of the alteration: "Il ne fallut à l'Assemblée qu'un décret pour effacer ses provinces, œuvre des siècles. . . . Je ne pourrais jamais assez redire, et la postérité ne voudra jamais croire avec quelle rapidité l'ancien régime a croulé dès qu'on y a porté la main dans la Constituante. . . . Qui eut jamais pensé que ces vieux Parlements qui avaients rempli notre histoire de leurs débats, de leurs ambitions, de leurs plaintes, de leurs dominations ambigues, fussent renversés en un jour, sans trouver dans les trois ordres une seule voix pour les défendre ou pour les regretter?"—"La Révolution," i. 109-115.

induced to acquiesce in the extinction of all their ancient privileges by the new permission to elect their own administrative officers and magistrates. But the very excess of their liberality defeated its object. They made the power of election so universal that it was looked upon as of no value at all; or, if the mob was pleased with it, as affording a constant recurrence of pretexts for tumult and disorder, every class above the mob for the very same reason disliked and dreaded it; of those, too, who looked at the future working of these changes, and their probable effect on the policy of the kingdom, many foresaw no slight mischief in the concentration of the whole governing power of the State in Paris, to which there would henceforth be neither check nor counterpoise.* The extinction of the old provinces therefore was received with general discontent, and in many parts of the kingdom gave rise to riots which, so wide-spreading and rapid is the contagion of violence, were marked by the same blood-thirsty character that had distinguished the insurrections of the capital. The worst outrages took place in the great towns of the south: at Marseilles, at Aix, and other places. In some the mob broke open the prisons, and murdered any prisoners whom they suspected of entertaining views different to their own. In others they massacred the magistrates, tearing their bodies to pieces, and terri-

* Their forebodings were realized in the opinion of Count Mathieu Dumas, who outlived all his contemporaries, took a prominent part in many of the early scenes of the Revolution; and in the reign of Louis Philippe occupied the leisure of his old age in describing those events of which he had a personal knowledge. He, bearing in mind the history of the Empire, the Restoration, and the government which was established by the Revolution of 1830, affirms that the division of the kingdom into departments "facilitated in the sequel, under the Consulate and the Empire, the re-establishment of absolute power when anarchy had completed the corruption of liberty."—"Memoirs of Dumas," i. 167.

fying the peaceable inhabitants by processions in which the mangled remains of their victims formed the most conspicuous feature. At Brest, the sailors on board the fleet, who were dissatisfied with some recent edicts affecting themselves, increased the formidable character of the tumults, as they did also at Toulon, where already strong indications were exhibited of the feeling which three years afterwards led the citizens to invite the assistance of the English fleet. Pillage, fire, and bloodshed raged everywhere unchecked, unchastised. The authorities of the disturbed districts, terrified and helpless, saw no prospect of personal safety to themselves but in inaction. And when Maury endeavoured to rouse the Assembly to pass a resolution expressive of its indignation at the outrages of which every day brought fresh intelligence, Charles Lameth was not ashamed to speak of them as trifles, in respect of which he was ready to defend the people against their accusers. And though there was a talk of sending down some troops to Aix, in reality not a single person was punished judicially or even prosecuted for his share in these atrocities.

The Assembly was the more culpable because in two instances officers who were not under its orders showed by their perfect success in dealing with more formidable outbreaks than those which have been mentioned, how easily, or at least how certainly, proper firmness would have quelled them everywhere. In those districts which had been the stronghold of the Huguenots, religious fanaticism added exasperation to political discontent. It had been stimulated by the recent seizure of ecclesiastical property and by the other decrees relating to the church and the clergy, which excited the most ardent feelings in both Protestants and Catholics. The former were led to

hope and the latter to fear that the extinction of the Catholic church, or at least of its supremacy in the land, was intended; a result which one party was eager to co-operate in and hasten, and the other of course equally zealous to avert. At Nîmes, Montauban, and other districts where the Protestants were still numerous, and at Toulouse, where they even formed an important part of the national guard, they endeavoured to overpower the Catholics. One of the ministers, who subsequently became notorious in a way which said as little for his courage as his conduct now did for his religion, Jean Bon St. André, was especially busy in exciting his flock to acts of fury. "It was," he declared, "the day of vengeance for which they had been waiting a hundred years."* The Catholics were more dangerous still; they accused the Protestants of being counter-revolutionists; and, while the priests tried to rouse the populace on religious grounds, the Vicomte de Mirabeau, a younger brother of the great orator, and one or two other nobles who had joined the popular party, and held commissions in regiments quartered in these districts, began to tamper with the soldiers under their command; but the ministers, who, from some unexplained cause, seem to have been allowed by the Assembly to exercise their ancient authority in that part of the kingdom, sent down Count Mathieu Dumas with extensive powers over Guienne, Perigord, and Upper Languedoc. They had made a fortunate choice. Dumas had no time to lose. Four thousand national guards were already under arms in the cause of insurrection, and with them bands of unorganized rioters, who had risen to such a pitch of audacity that both at Montauban and Nîmes they

* Dumas, i. 175.

had attacked the regular soldiers; having been defeated with the slaughter of eighty of their number at Nîmes, but at Montauban having routed a troop of dragoons, slain some of them, and taken the rest prisoners. Dumas at once assumed the command of a division of regular troops which he found at Bordeaux, and by a judicious display of force, combined with a conciliatory address, he succeeded in entirely allaying the excitement and restoring tranquillity without more bloodshed.

A little later in the year a disturbance still more formidable broke out on the opposite side of the kingdom, which did not admit of so easy a pacification, though fortunately there also the rioters found a man able to deal with them. It was rather a mutiny than a popular riot. The Marquis de Bouillé, the same officer who had gained so much renown for himself and made such valuable acquisitions for his country in the West Indies during the last war, was the military commander-in-chief of the western provinces. He was firmly attached to the monarchy and to the person of the king; and from the first moment that the Revolution showed its true character he had devoted all his energies to the task of encouraging and preserving such a feeling among the troops under his orders as should make them the nucleus of a force by whose instrumentality, at some favorable opportunity, he might be able to restore to his sovereign some portion of the authority which the Assembly had wrested from him.* The army throughout the country, however, was in general inclined to favour the Revolution. The example set by the country at large of throwing off all ancient restraints and discarding all old customs

* "Mémoires de De Bouillé," c. vi. p. 104.

had not been lost upon the soldiers. They had become impatient of discipline. Clubs were formed in every regiment, with managing committees, under the orders of which they defied their commanders; in many instances seizing on the military chest, and if its contents were insufficient to satisfy their rapacity, extorting money from their officers.* But in no quarter had this spirit of insubordination spread more generally than among the troops under the command of De Bouillé. His high military character, and his achievements, far superior to those of any living general, were completely neutralized in their eyes by his avowed attachment to the king; though he had not been one of those nobles who had set themselves against all reform, but, on the contrary, had formally given in his adhesion to the new constitution as far as it had yet been framed. He was aware of the feelings of his men towards him; he knew, for he had intercepted many of their letters, that many members of the extreme Left of the Assembly, and of the Jacobin Club, were in constant communication with them and were endeavouring to excite them to mutiny. He knew, too, that Lafayette, though connected with him by ties of blood, was secretly jealous of him, and desirous to undermine his authority; and though he exercised unceasing vigilance, he felt assured that these intrigues would not long remain without fruit.

The first outbreak took place at Metz; which, however, as the citizens, from dread of military licence, and the national guards, from jealousy of the regular troops, took his part, he had no difficulty in suppressing without bloodshed. He even in one instance

* "Lorsqu'ils n'en trouvent pas assez ils font contribuer leurs officiers, qui sont la plupart contraints d'emprunter des marchands et des bourgeois pour satisfaire leur cupidité."—De Bouillé, vi. 107.

by his address and skilful appeals to their professional pride as soldiers brought the most disorderly battalion to such a sense of shame at its misconduct that, when on their expressions of contrition he released them from their barracks in which he had sentenced them to a week's confinement, they refused his mercy, and requested his leave to set an example of obedience to the rest of the army by undergoing their punishment for its full term.* But a fortnight afterwards, towards the end of July, the garrison of Nancy showed signs of a more mutinous spirit; began to tamper with other detachments in the neighbourhood; and at last had even the insolence to send a deputation to Paris to present a revolutionary address to the Assembly. They were disappointed in the result of this step. They had looked at all events for the support of the Jacobins; but Mirabeau had by this time fully made up his mind that enough had been already done to secure the liberties of the nation for the future, and that, if the monarchy was to be preserved at all, the spread of revolutionary principles must be checked without delay. With these views he came to the assistance of the ministers on this occasion; and by a powerful speech on the necessity of repressing the spirit of anarchy in the army induced the Assembly to pass a vote affirming that the garrison of Nancy was guilty of treason to the nation,† and authorizing the governor to employ military force if necessary to reduce it to submission. General Malseigne was despatched to Nancy to announce this decree to the muti-

* De Bouillé, p. 110.

† "L'Assemblée. . . . a décreté d'une voix unanime que la violation, à main armée, par les troupes des décrets de l'Assemblée Nationale sanctionnés par le roi, était un crime de lèze-nation au premier chef," &c.—"Decree of the Assembly." Appendix A, to De Bouillé's "Mémoires."

neers and to assist in its execution, but his arrival rather exasperated than quelled the spirit of disaffection. The garrison, relying on the support of many of their comrades outside the walls, broke out into more open mutiny than before. It consisted of six battalions of infantry and a regiment of cavalry; and, as they had been joined by some bands of brigands from the rural districts, and by a number of the lower class of citizens, who had forced the arsenal and supplied themselves with arms, swords, muskets, and even cannon and ammunition, they thought themselves strong enough to encounter any force which the marquis could put in motion against them. So audacious were they that they did not fear even to defy the Assembly, but attacked Malseigne himself while discharging his commission by reading to them the decree which had been passed; and it was only by great presence of mind, and by the exertion of a very unusual degree of personal strength, that he escaped from their hands. He took refuge in Luneville, which which was held by a battalion on which he could rely; and when De Bouillé learnt this, and that a battalion of the mutineers had even pursued him to Luneville, and had tried to terrify the troops there into surrendering him, he saw that resolute and instant action was the sole remedy for such a state of affairs, and prepared to attack Nancy with all his force. He might have been excused for thinking it insufficient, for it scarcely exceeded three thousand men; of whom nearly half were cavalry, an arm which was of but little use in an attack upon a town. He sent, however, to Metz for 1200 grenadiers and soldiers of the national guard of that town, who, he was informed, were anxious to efface the memory of their late disorderly conduct by faithful service, and for eight field guns.

But while they were on their way he learnt that the Luneville battalion had been seduced into delivering up Malseigne, that two thousand national guards from the surrounding districts had also joined the mutineers, and that the governor, General Denone, and Malseigne had been thrown into prison.

Nothing daunted, he began his march, sending forward a summons to the garrison and the town to submit instantly to the decrees of the Assembly, and to deliver up their ringleaders; and, refusing to receive a deputation which they despatched to remonstrate with him, he repeated his demand for their instant submission, and advanced rapidly towards the town. The citizens were terrified by his firmness; and when he had almost reached the gates, and was preparing to force his way in, for the town was but slightly fortified, a fresh deputation met him, promising submission to all his demands, and bringing with them Malseigne and Denone, who had been set at liberty, as a pledge of their sincerity.

The marquis congratulated himself on having thus brought so dangerous an affair to so happy a termination; but his exultation was premature. He himself could hardly account for the renewal of the outbreak with greater violence than ever; but it seems probable that the promises of submission which had just been made were the work of the few, and that the bulk of the mutinous soldiers retained their spirit of disloyalty, and conceived that a single act of violence would so implicate those who were willing to yield as to compel them to rejoin them. Accordingly they picked a quarrel with De Bouillé's advanced guard, and rushed forward to fire the cannons which were still where they had originally placed them in battery at the gate. It was in vain that one of their officers,

a young Captain Désilles, endeavoured to restrain them. He threw himself in front of the battery; they dragged him away. He clung to one of the guns, trying to close the touch-hole; they cut him to pieces, fired, and with a single discharge struck down above fifty of De Bouillé's men. Their comrades, without waiting for orders, dashed forward to avenge them; stormed the battery, made themselves masters of the gate, and forced their way into the great square of the town; but there they were assailed on all sides by a heavy fire from every window and house-top; and when the marquis himself, who hastened up on hearing the firing, reached the spot, he found the head of his column in consternation and confusion. His presence restored confidence and order, but a sanguinary conflict ensued, both sides being inflamed by mutual animosity: his men thinking that the mutineers had entrapped them into the town by false promises of submission, in order to have them more completely in their power; and the mutineers, of whom one battalion, in obedience to De Bouillé's order, had defiled out before the first shot was fired, fancying a similar treachery had been practised by the royal troops to gain admission. They did not, indeed, all join in the conflict; for their officers, who throughout had done their best to keep them to their duty, had sufficient influence with some battalions to induce them to retire to their barracks, and to be contented with defending themselves if they were attacked. But still those who fought far outnumbered the troops at the disposal of the marquis, and he lost above four hundred men. At the end of three hours, however, his skill prevailed. The loss of the insurgents was far greater than his, and he had also taken five hundred prisoners and all their guns. The soldiers

in the barracks laid down their arms, and obeyed his orders to quit the town; before night the Swiss regiment of Châteauvieux, which had been the most violent and the most obstinate, also submitted; and after so bloody a day the inhabitants slept in peace and security.

The mutiny had a singular sequel. De Bouillé had no power to punish the mutineers of the French regiments, nor the brigands and citizens whom he had taken prisoners, though with arms in their hands: but among his own troops were three battalions of Swiss; and, as the treaty between France and Switzerland which authorized their taking service with the French army provided also that they should preserve their own military tribunals, their officers the next day claimed the right to bring the ringleaders of the Châteauvieux regiment to court martial. They condemned and executed twenty-two, and sentenced about fifty to the galleys; who, however, at a later period, when the Girondists were masters of the Assembly, were pardoned at its intercession and conducted to Paris, where they were entertained as champions and martyrs of liberty.* It was stranger still that the example of the gallant marquis produced no effect upon his own party. It was hardly possible, when the number and equipment of the insurgents was compared with his means of withstanding them, that any revolt should be more formidable than that which he had quelled; and his success, therefore, was a lesson which could not be disputed, that firmness and resolution were the weapons with which all such outbreaks, all assaults upon legitimate authority, should be encountered. Yet in the sad two years which followed but

* "Croker's Essays," p. 188.

one more instance occurred of a disturbance being suppressed with energy; and then the officer who had gained the advantage was not acting under the direction of the king or of the ministry, and had not sufficient sagacity or loyalty to follow it up.

Undoubtedly each succeeding act of weakness or concession on the part of the king tended to disarm him for the future; and it gives De Bouillé an additional claim upon our approval that some months before the revolt at Nancy broke out Louis had taken what in his judgment was a downward step which could never be retraced, and of which the effects could never be repaired.* On the 4th of February he had gone down to the Assembly,† and addressed the members in a carefully worded speech, in which he complained of the general relaxation of order, the universal contempt for the law; of the financial embarrassments of the country; and of the want of harmony between the different classes of society and the different parties in the State, which prevented them co-operating for the remedy of these evils. By implication he gently reproved the Assembly itself for the violence and precipitation of many of its acts; but invited them for the future to take a larger view of the state of affairs, and to discard all considerations but those of the welfare of the country, and the eternal principles of justice, a due regard for which in every measure of legislation

* De Bouillé, c. vi. p. 104.

† It is a remarkable proof of how carefully this scheme was considered beforehand, that Arthur Young knew that the ministers were contemplating it three weeks before, though he understood that they had some difficulty in persuading the king to adopt it. See his Journal, date Jan. 16, 1790. The next day he records that the king rejected it (owing, it was believed, to the advice and influence of the queen), but that "Lafayette was so strenuous for its being brought about, that it will not yet be abandoned, but proposed again at a more favorable moment."

was indispensable to that welfare; and concluded by repeating his assent to the new constitution as far as they had yet settled it; and by promising to unite with them in a spirit of affection and confidence in the labours which were still before them. His speech was received with acclamations; a deputation was appointed to escort him back to the Tuilleries, where the queen also assured the members of her concurrence in the sentiments which he had expressed; and, by way of a crowning compliment to him for his condescension the Assembly passed a resolution that the whole nation should at once take an oath of fidelity to the constitution. A few soberminded deputies of the moderate party, who were struck by the absurdity of swearing to observe a constitution of which only a portion was yet drawn up, refused to take the oath, preferring to resign their seats; and thus still further weakened the party in the Assembly who were yet disposed to struggle for the rights of the crown. But their example found no imitators out of doors; the Royalists in general took the oath in deference to the king, whose own conduct seemed to have suggested it; though in their hearts they took the same view of his speech as De Bouillé,* and looked on it as another obstacle which he had of his own accord erected in his own path, if ever the time should come that he should find it necessary to make a stand against the progress of revolutionary principles to which he had thus declared his adhesion. There were even in the accompaniments of the transaction incidents which were the harbingers of greater danger to the royal

* Even his own sister though, as we have seen in other extracts from her letters, not at all averse to concessions, disapproved of what Louis had done in this instance. She writes: "Je suis désolée de la dernière démarche du Roi, je prevois les suites les plus fâcheuses."—"Marie Antoinette," &c. No. 178.

family and to France itself than could as yet be suspected. It was on this occasion that Danton first came into public notice. Hitherto he was only known at the Jacobin Club. But he now came forward as a public speaker in the town council; and it was in compliance with a motion made by him that, after the Assembly had taken the oath of fidelity to the constitution, Bailly, as mayor of Paris, standing on the steps of the Hôtel de Ville, read the same formula to the populace, and swore to it on behalf of the citizens. The son too of the Duke d'Orleans, the young Duke de Chartres, now proclaimed that hostility to the reigning branch of his family which he never renounced. In every quarter of the city books were opened for the citizens to register their acceptance of the oath; and when that which had been made out for the district of the Palais Royal was brought to him, he erased the statement of his rank and titles, and described himself simply as Louis Philippe, citizen:* a signature which at the time was illegal, since it was some months before the decree which abolished titles was passed by the Assembly. And no noble, and much more no prince of the blood royal had the power to divest himself of his titles without the sanction of the sovereign.

The violent liberals viewed this transaction in the same light as De Bouillé, as an encouragement to themselves; and proceeded rapidly in their work of destruction. One night they abolished all titles of rank; an obscure deputy named Lambel making the proposal in the simplest terms, as one that only required stating to secure instant assent. Lafayette supported it; the Viscount de Montmorency, the descendant of a family which in the long roll of French nobles had no superior,

* Louis Blanc, iv. 275.

added an amendment prohibiting the use of armorial bearings; and the enthusiasm was so violent that many could not even obtain a hearing to argue against the motion. It was carried; a day or two afterwards other resolutions of a similar tendency were passed with equal facility; one abolished all orders of knighthood with the single exception of that of St. Louis; another extinguished the rights of primogeniture; and yet, so little consistency in their views had even the most extreme levellers that, at the very time that they were thus abolishing all memorials of former greatness, Camille Desmoulins was endeavouring to excite an additional prejudice against the unhappy king, by proclaiming a discovery which he pretended to have made that the founder of the family of Bourbon was Laurent Babon, a notary of Bourges.* Another evening enactments were decreed confiscating all the property of monastic establishments. The clergy of every kind, indeed, were the most especial objects of the enmity both of the Assembly and of the populace; who insulted and attacked them whenever they ventured to appear in the streets; and even tried to murder those who, like the Abbé Maury and M. de Cazalés had ventured to stand forth in the discussions as their champions;† while the ministers stood irresolute and helpless, not venturing to attempt to arrest the torrent, or even to turn it aside by any proposals of their own: They seemed to ignore the principle that in extensive constitutional reforms the initiative belongs to the established government, and that measures of that character can never, or very rarely be conducted to a

* Louis Blanc, iv. 74.

† Letters of Madame Elizabeth, Louis XVI., Marie Antoinette, &c., No. 189.

successful practical issue in other hands. And yet, had they known how to take advantage of circumstances, divisions were arising among the leaders of the reforming party in the Assembly which would have greatly facilitated their assumption of the lead which belonged to their offices. For the retreat of Mounier and his party had made room for others to push themselves into notoriety; and Barnave and Alexander Lameth, with Duport, who was a man of great tact in the management of a party, both in the Jacobin Club and in the Assembly were trying to engross the chief direction of the movement, and exciting the displeasure of Mirabeau; who affected to despise them, and ridiculed them as the triumvirate, but who was not the less jealous of them, as he saw that their inclination for more democratic measures than he approved was winning them some of the influence which he desired to monopolize, and which he conceived to be the natural fruit of his pre-eminent capacity. He therefore, from the middle of the summer of 1790, set himself resolutely to work to withstand them; while they hired pamphleteers and journalists to attack him, and narratives of the great treason of the Count de Mirabeau were hawked about the streets.

The charge which they intended such an expression to convey was true; though it is as strong a proof as any other occurrence of the incurable disloyalty of those who made it that they should have spoken of the attachment of a French noble to the crown as a crime. In the earlier stages of the Revolution the royal family had naturally looked upon him as their most bitter and most formidable enemy. But he had friends at court who were aware of the change that events had worked in his views; and who urged on

the king the importance of conciliating him, and binding him permanently to his cause, and also the ease with which it might be done. And though the queen had the greatest repugnance to hold any communications with a man of so profligate a character, the welfare of the State outweighed every other consideration, and on the 3rd of July* both the king and herself admitted him to an interview in the gardens of St. Cloud: to which palace they had retired when the summer heat rendered the Tuilleries disagreeable if not unwholesome. Louis, though present, took no part in the discussion; the queen was the spokeswoman, and her grace and affability so fascinated the

* The commencement of communications between the court and Mirabeau is generally placed later. Alison (vol. ii. p. 64, ed. 1849) even puts it as late as February, 1791, forgetting that Mirabeau died in the first week of April. Dumont puts it earlier, before the execution of Favras (p. 151), but admits he is not certain about his dates. A letter in the collection of M. Feuillet de Conches, No. 204, from the queen herself to the emperor, fixes the interview as having taken place July 3, adding what seems to have been unknown before this publication, that the king was also present. It may be remarked that Madame de Campan, who also speaks of the interview as having taken place during the sojourn of the court at St. Cloud, yet affirms that the idea of the royal family escaping from Paris to some town in the provinces (which seems to have been first conceived by Mirabeau) was discussed in the royal circle as early as March, 1790.—Madame de Campan, c. 16. And in the "Memoirs" of Count La Marck, who was employed by Mirabeau as a go-between, the first negotiations between him and the court are stated to have taken place in March. The date of letter No. 190 in M. Feuillet de Conches' collection, which he prints as April 22, is, he admits, conjectural; but if his conjecture is right, negotiations had commenced, or were commencing then. De Tocqueville, too, intimates that the date of Mirabeau's connexion with the court was certainly not later than the beginning of July. He says ("L'Ancien Régime," &c. p. 11), "Moins d'un an après que la Révolution était commencée, Mirabeau écrivit secrètement au roi," &c. One expression quoted by De Tocqueville, "n'est-ce donc rien que d'être. . . . sans corps de noblesse," must, it would seem, have been written *after* the abolition of titles, which was carried June 20. And if so, the date of this letter is fixed within very narrow limits, as "moins d'un an" must be before the anniversary of the taking of the Bastille, July 14. Dumont speaks in round numbers of "la trahison de M. avec la cour dans les six derniers mois de sa vie."—"Souvenirs," p. 218.

great demagogue that he henceforth devoted himself wholly to the promotion of the interests of the king, making but one condition, that he should be taken into the pay of the court, for in fact he had no means of independent livelihood. There is no part of Mirabeau's conduct which has given occasion to the revolutionary party for such unsparing reproach as his thus stipulating for payment of his services to the crown. But the righteousness of the cause which from this time he advocated, and even the wisdom of the measures which he recommended, does not depend on the purity of his character or motives. Though it is true that the profligacy of his life had rendered him, almost inevitably, venal and corrupt, it is not true that in this instance his corruption led him to act against his principles. For even when most ardent and resolute to limit the royal authority, he had never for a moment conceived the idea of abolishing it. He had proposed to place one prince on the throne instead of another, but the throne itself he had never dreamt of overturning; he had on the contrary a firm conviction that none but a monarchical government was suited to the genius of the French people. It must be added that the revolutionists were wholly disentitled to make such a complaint of him by their own conduct. For, with the single exception of Robespierre, whose passion was not for money, there was not one who was not still more corrupt than Mirabeau; who was not induced or willing to be induced by bribes to uphold a cause which they professed to believe mischievous to the country. Danton, one of the vilest of the whole crew, was for months in the king's pay,* earning his wages,

* Bertrand de Moleville, i. 354.

which were immense, with a fidelity and assiduity which were admitted by the ministers themselves. The still baser, because more cowardly leaders of the Girondins, Vergniaud, Brissot, Guadet, and their friends wished to make a similar bargain; which only went off because the court did not think them worth purchasing at so high a price as they put on themselves.* And, if anything could increase the indignation of mankind against the monsters who dipped their hands in the blood of their innocent sovereign, it would be that their rabid outcry for blood was not prompted by any love for liberty, however mistaken, or by any sincere desire for a republic, but was the mere dictate of disappointed cupidity.†

Mirabeau did not look upon the measures that had yet been carried as at all unfavorable to the sovereign power. The abolition of the Parliaments, the extinction of the peculiar privileges of different provinces, and the general levelling of all classes, he even regarded as eminently favorable to it. Richelieu himself, he affirmed, would have desired to form the whole people into one single class. He pronounced too that the people in general were profoundly attached both to the king individually, and to the monarchical authority.* But in order to put the king in a con-

* "Ils [Brissot, Isnard, Vergniaud, Guadet, et l'Abbé Fauchet] avaient tous consenti à vendre au ministère leur influence dans l'Assemblée à raison de 6000 francs par mois pour chacun d'eux. Mais M. de Lessart trouvait que c'était les payer bien cher; et comme ils ne voulurent rien rebattre de leur demande cette négociation n'eut aucune suite, et ne produisit d'autre effet que d'aigrir davantage ces cinq députés contre le ministre," ch. ii. 356. Every one of the five voted for the death of the king.—See Appendix to Lacretelle, vol. x.

† M. de Simolin affirms that every member of the Assembly was equally corrupt. "Ce qui est certain, c'est qu'avec de l'argent on obtient tout du patriotisme des députés qui gouvernent la France."—"Marie Antoinette," &c., No. 271.

‡ Dumont, "Souvenirs," p. 147.

dition to take proper advantage of these circumstances it was, he conceived, indispensable that he should emancipate himself from the control of the Parisian populace, and of the Assembly, by withdrawing from Paris to some distant fortified town; where he might soon call round him troops on whom he could rely, and, supported by them, might repeal any enactments which the Assembly had passed of a pernicious character, and which had not been authorized by the cahiers; dissolve the Assembly itself, and summon another which, he did not doubt, would prove more manageable. The chief defect in this plan, as Mirabeau's own friends pointed out to him,* was that its success depended on the king himself, who had not sufficient firmness to carry it through. But he replied that the queen had the courage of a man, and sufficient spirit to inspire her husband with the requisite resolution. How sound was his judgment of the necessity of such a step was testified by the events of the next summer. But he was mistaken in his estimate of the queen's influence, or rather of the extent of the king's irresolution; for all the time that the court was at St. Cloud, the efforts which were made to induce him to quit the neighbourhood of Paris were incessant† and fruitless. And the project was postponed till the sagacious head which had planned it, and which, had it succeeded, would have been the most likely to secure to the king the full advantage to be reaped from it, was in the grave.‡

It was, however, certainly not true that the general tendency of the majority of the measures which had

* Dumont, "Souvenirs," p. 147.

† See "Marie Antoinette," &c. Letters of Mme. Elizabeth, Nos. 224, 225.

‡ "Mirabeau devait rester à Paris et veiller sur les mouvemens de l'Assemblée."—Ib. p. 145.

been enacted had been favorable to the permanence of the royal authority, even under the most limited constitution. In May the Assembly passed one resolution, taking the power of declaring peace and war from the king and vesting it exclusively in themselves, in spite of a powerful and fearless speech in which Mirabeau denounced such an enactment as utterly inconsistent with any idea of a king that could possibly be formed. And it is plain that not only is it so, but that it must likewise be mischievous to any country, from the effect which it must inevitably have of making wars more frequent, when the embarking in them depends not on the sober judgment of a well-informed and responsible ministry, but on the passionate decision of a partially informed assembly. It was even more dangerous to the preservation of the royal rank at all, that at the beginning of June they appropriated the entire domains of the crown as national property, granting the king in its stead a civil list of twenty-five millions of livres for himself, and four millions for the queen; since, though such an arrangement was justified by the example of England, the extent to which the Assembly had curtailed the prerogatives of Louis, and had abolished the natural support of the throne by the suppression of the nobility, deprived his case of the most essential points of resemblance to that of the English monarch; and it was but too probable that the present or some future Assembly might be seized with a fit of economy, and think that the nation was paying too high a salary to a prince whose power and acts as sovereign were so restricted and apparently unimportant.* In fact, the arrangement had hardly been completed when some of its promoters began to denounce the allotment of so large a sum to the queen,

* Lacretelle, viii. 47.

asserting that all the courts of justice in the kingdom put together were not more expensive.* The Assembly took from the king, too, the power of granting pensions, except of a very limited value; cancelling those which had already been conferred of a greater amount; and ruining a vast number of persons who, or whose fathers, had done good service to the State in war, or as men of genius and learning, and who had no other means of subsistence left but such as flowed from the sovereign's judicious liberality. That liberality had, no doubt, often been abused; but it was remarkable that when a document known as the red book, in which the account of all such extraordinary expenditure was preserved was produced, it was found that one of the heaviest items contained in it was a grant of sixty thousand livres to the mother of the two Counts Lameth for their education, for which she otherwise would have been unable to provide. The production of the book was favorable to the king's character, as displaying not only his kindness of heart, but the moderation of his expenditure on objects of personal gratification. It would have been far more so had he yielded to the demand which was made for the red book of his grandfather's reign, from the contrast which could not fail to have been afforded by the prodigalities of that infamous prince; and from the proof which would have been supplied of how great and various had been the abuses which he himself had silently extinguished. But he refused to raise his own credit at his predecessor's expense; and, if it had been desired to institute a comparison between them, enough was known, without the production of any accounts of the last reign, to make the task easy.

* Louis Blanc, iv. 264.

Perhaps a more dangerous omen of the future than any single encroachment, however unreasonable or insulting, was to be found in the pains taken by the revolutionary party to keep alive the excitement of the populace, though some of the means adopted were not a little ludicrous. It was determined to celebrate the anniversary of the capture of the Bastille by a festival in the Champ de Mars; and to work the people up to the required degree of enthusiasm, a crackbrained member of the Jacobin club, a Prussian of noble birth, named Klootz, who to show his affinity to the philosophers of old had christened himself Anacharsis, hired a band of vagrants and idlers, and dressing them up in a variety of costumes and disguises to represent Arabs, Red Indians, Turks, Chinese, Laplanders, and other tribes, savage and civilized, led them into the Assembly as a deputation from all the nations of the earth to announce the resurrection of the whole world from slavery, and demanded permission for them to attend the festival of the ensuing month, that each on behalf of his country might give in his adhesion to the principles of liberty as expounded by the Assembly. It was hardly less strange that Klootz should desire such a spectacle and make such a speech, than that the president of the day, M. de Menou, should listen to it with a composed countenance, and gravely thank the orator and his followers for the honour done to France by such an embassy; and it is even more marvellous that a noble like Alexander Lameth, after rivalling the president's praise of them as holy pilgrims who had discarded the shackles of superstition, should turn and harangue his colleagues with the statement that, as monuments of despotism and flattery could not fail to be shocking to the understandings and feelings of so enlightened

a company, they should at once hasten to demolish the pedestal of the statue of Louis XIV. in the Place des Victoires, which bore on its different sides effigies of the nations which had been subdued by the arms of that vainglorious monarch. His proposal was received with enthusiastic cheers; and the finest monument then existing in Paris, which the celebrated Duke de la Feuillade had raised to his master's honour, was defaced in a fit of blind fury more resembling the orgies of frantic Bacchanals, or the thirst for destruction which inspired the Goths and Huns, than the conduct of the chosen legislators of a polite and accomplished people.

The festival itself, which, as had been arranged, took place on the 14th of July, was a more orderly solemnity than might have been expected from such a prelude. For weeks beforehand it had been anticipated by the Parisians with an eagerness which was rendered keener by the diminution of their usual amusements and entertainments during the past year, the result of the gloom which the recent outrages and the constant apprehension of fresh outbreaks had spread over the city; and from the moment that the Assembly announced the intended jubilee, all classes had devoted themselves to the preparation for it with a resolution to make that day at least a contrast to the rest of the year. The arrangements were on the most gigantic scale. Round the sides of the Champ de Mars a huge embankment was to be raised to give it the appearance of an amphitheatre, sufficiently spacious to accommodate 300,000 spectators. The entrance was to be beneath a lofty and highly decorated triumphal arch; in the centre was to be erected a grand altar; and on one side a gorgeous pavilion for the king, his retinue, the members of the Assembly, and the mu-

nicipal magistrates. They were all to be performers in the ceremony, but not the only ones, nor, in the intention of the designers of the festival, the most important. They were indeed to swear, in the face of all the surrounding multitude, to the observance of the constitution (though it was hardly more complete now than it had been six months before); but the same oath was also to be taken by the national guards of Paris, by a deputation of representatives from every division of the same force in the different departments, and from every regiment of the regular army. And it was to bind the soldiers throughout the kingdom to the new order of things that the ceremony was originally designed.* As the day approached it began to be feared that the preparations would not be completed in time. So much was to be done that fifteen thousand workmen made comparatively slow progress; but the moment that Bailly gave utterance to this apprehension they were reinforced with ten times their numbers. The artisans rushed from their workshops; the students from their schools; the artists from their easels; the actors from their theatres. Even the political clubs suspended their sittings to further the work; and, little as he was used to such employment, Sièyes was seen digging by the side of General Beauharnais. The women were as enthusiastic as the men; first sempstresses and milliners, and, as the excitement spread, even the

* This view is borrowed from Lacretelle, whose words are: "Il lui [à l'Assemblée] importait de faire une épreuve sur toutes les gardes nationales de France, d'animer ce grand corps dont tous les membres étaient encore épars et incohérens, de leur donner une même impulsion." He adds presently: "Enfin, de faire sous les yeux d'Europe une imposante révue des forces qu'elle pourrait un jour opposer à des rois inquiets et courroucés."

wives and daughters of the better classes of citizens thronged the plain from daybreak, cutting turves, wheeling barrows, or more suitably fashioning and festooning hangings and draperies to complete the work of the builders; and as in many instances these motley volunteers marched down to the scene of action in procession with flags flying and bands playing, the city from the end of June wore the appearance of a general holiday.* Even Louis lent his countenance to the work, driving down and visiting the labourers, who showed their appreciation of his condescension by forming a guard of honour round him while he remained, and escorting him back to his carriage with obstreperous cheers.

A zeal so universal secured the timely completion of every arrangement; and though when the appointed day came the weather which had hitherto been fine and summer-like, suddenly changed, the most unimpassioned spectator, or even he who most strongly disapproved the character which the Revolution had assumed, could not deny that a more imposing spectacle had rarely been presented in any country. To those who contemplate it by the light of subsequent events it is rendered the more impressive by the recollection that it was the last occasion for some years on which either the dignity of the king or the majesty of God received their due and customary homage. Vast as the amphitheatre was, it was filled before midnight on the 13th with a dense crowd in holiday attire: a marvellous and magnificent sight from their mere numbers; for perhaps no such mass of people had ever before been collected together in the same space since the world began. And early the

* Moore's "View," &c., vol. ii. c. 20.

next morning the heads of the procession began to defile under the arch at the entrance of the plain. Lafayette at the head of the national guards led the way. To add to his dignity Louis had offered him the sword of the Constable of France; a dignity which had been disused for many years. But, gratifying as the succession to the Montmorencis and Lesdiguières would have been to his vanity, he declined to connect himself so closely with the crown as the acceptance of such a post would have necessitated; and contented himself with the additional dignity which the enrolment of the detachments from the departments under his banner conferred on him, making him appear the commander-in-chief of the national guard of the whole kingdom. Then came regiment after regiment and deputation after deputation of the regular army, altogether above forty thousand soldiers;* and, to show the state of subordination to the law which they were expected to acknowledge for the future, their swords were sheathed, while the deputies and municipal magistrates and other peaceful citizens who made part of the procession marched with their swords drawn.† The sailors from the fleet; the citizens of Paris; the municipal magistrates; the members of the Assembly; with deputations from every department and every important town, followed in order; and in the midst marched two hundred priests with Talleyrand in his episcopal vestments at their head,

* Letter of M. Simolin to Count d'Ostermann; "Marie Antoinette," &c., No. 208. M. Simolin, who was the Russian Ambassador in Paris, adds: "Le roi et la famille royale, ont été applaudis au-delà de tout ce qu'on peut imaginer." The queen's own account is: "Nous nous en allons d'ici très contens, si l'on peut l'être des cris. Mais j'avoue que je crains la rage de l'Assemblée, qui du reste est assez maltraitée par les Fédérés."—Ibid. 206.

† Louis Blanc, v. 322.

his and their white robes somewhat uncanonically decked with tricolour ribbons, who passed on into the centre of the plain and ranged themselves on the steps of the altar. So vast was the procession, that though it began to move at eight in the morning it was half-past three in the afternoon before the detachment of guards which closed it took up their ground. When at last all were in their places, Louis, accompanied by his family, entered the pavilion. He was known by sight to the deputations from the most distant provinces, for he had reviewed them in a body the day before; when several of them had been separately presented to him, towards whom for once he had discarded his habitual reserve, assuring them of his fatherly regard for his subjects not only with condescension but with cordiality. And the queen had made a great impression on many of the members by her judicious affability. Louis wore no robes, but the ordinary dress of a French noble. The queen was in full evening dress, and wore in her hair a plume of tricolour feathers. Yet even on this day, which was intended to be one of universal joy, evil signs were not wanting how powerful their enemies were; for no seat had been provided for her, and by the side of that erected for the king another had been placed for the President of the Assembly as nearly as possible on the same level. These subtleties, however, were lost on the body of spectators. They cheered him joyously; before the shouts had died away Talleyrand began the service of the mass; and then administered the oath of fidelity to "the nation, the law, and the king," and also to "the constitution as decreed by the Assembly and accepted by the king." Lafayette took it first in the name of the army; next to him Talleyrand himself in the name

of the church; then Bailly for the citizens of Paris; and other representatives of the different classes or departments in their order. It was a stormy day; and just at the time when the king was to set the seal to the universal acceptance of the constitution by swearing to exert all his own power for its maintenance, the rain came down so heavily that it was impossible for him to leave the shelter of the pavilion. As it happened, the momentary disappointment gave greater effect to his act. Advancing to the front of the pavilion, so as to be seen by the whole multitude, he took the oath with a loud voice and great dignity of manner; and as he resumed his seat the rain cleared away; the sun burst through the clouds; and the queen, as if by a sudden inspiration, brought forward the little dauphin and showed him to the people.* Those whom the king's voice could not reach could still see the graceful action; and from every side of the plain one universal acclamation burst forth which seemed at least to show that not without great perseverance of artifice and malignity would it be possible to excite so warm-hearted a people to disloyalty and treason.

Presently king, troops, priests, and spectators departed, and the Champ de Mars was left empty. But the rejoicings of the day or of the week were not over; in the gardens of La Muette a banquet was laid out for no fewer than twenty-two thousand guests, the deputies from the different departments; Fédérés, as they were called, from having assisted at this grand federation. For three evenings a ball on a scale corresponding to the festival of the morning was held on the place where had stood the Bastille,

* "Mémoires de Ferrières," ii. 7.

which by order of the Assembly had lately been razed to the ground; and on each evening the whole city from Charenton to Montmartre, from the Champs Elysées to the Faubourg St. Antoine, was illuminated, the most conspicuous figure being a vast model of the still detested fortress.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

However cheering to sanguine tempers they may be for a moment, the impressions produced by such festivities are never durable; and it was soon seen that, however loud had been the acclamations of the populace, however plain the terms of the oath in which Assembly and people had vowed loyalty to the king, their real feelings were in no degree altered. The queen even thought that the Assembly was discontented at the result of the festival,* and at the manifestations of enthusiasm for the king, which far exceeded any that were displayed for itself. It is certain that Marat and his party, who from the first had denounced the ceremony as a mockery, became more vehement than ever in their attacks upon the court, choosing as an especial topic of their denunciations its absence from the city, and trying to excite a mob to drag the king in by force from St. Cloud, as the year before they had dragged him in from Versailles; to throw the queen, the Count de Provence, and the ministers into prison, and to put to death five or six hundred individuals as enemies of the people. So atrocious was the language and whole character of one pamphlet† in which these

* See ante, note on p. 235.

† Louis Blanc, iv. 339, quoting the pamphlet.

exhortations were put forward with a terseness that had a great effect on the mob, that Malouet ventured to move that Marat, as the author, should be prosecuted before the Châtelet; while his friends did not dare to justify it, but contented themselves with turning Malouet's motion aside by a reference to the committee of jurisprudence to decide how it should be carried out. It never came to a decision, or at least never reported it; but in the next few weeks the pamphlet itself nearly bore part of its intended fruit, and two attempts were made to assassinate the queen, for neither of which were the culprits brought to justice, though the name and person of one of them at least were known to the police.*

It is difficult to say whether the retirement of Necker from the ministry which took place while the court was at St. Cloud was mischievous or not to his royal master. He had not for some time exercised any real control over the Government: though he was the finance minister, the most important operation of the year, the issue of assignats, or Government bills secured on the domains previously belonging to the crown and the church, had been adopted by the Assembly against his will, and in spite of his remonstrance. Had not his idea of the duties of a minister been wholly different from that which prevails in this country, he could not have consented to retain office for a moment after he had been overruled in a transaction of such magnitude, for the amount of assignats so issued in the spring of this year had been four hundred millions; but he professed to look upon himself as the servant of the Assembly, and to be

* Madame de Campan, c. 17. His name was Rotonde. She adds: "J'ignore comment on parvint à le soustraire de supplice."

entitled to throw all the responsibility on that body whenever it saw fit to interfere with his functions; he was, he said, the shepherd, whose duty it was to take care of the flock in the absence of the master; but, at any moment that the master chose to assume the direction into his own hands, bound to obey his orders. Entertaining these notions he was not driven from his post by the embarrassments of the revenue, though this issue of assignats, and a loan of eighty millions which he had procured from the bank, were far from terminating them; but rather by a mixture of mortified vanity and personal fear. He not only had lost his influence over the Assembly, but his popularity with the mob; some of the more violent demagogues were already talking of bringing him to trial, though without specifying the particular offence of which they proposed to impeach him; and there were too many precedents for their making the trial of any one obnoxious to them superfluous by hanging him first.* He therefore resolved to resign his office and to quit France; but, in carrying out his intention he showed a strange disregard of the respect due to his royal master, for it was not to him but to the Assembly that in the first week of September he announced his resolution, sending the President a letter in which he founded it partly on his health, which he described as failing, and partly on "the mortal anxieties of his wife, as virtuous as she was dear to his heart." It was hardly to be wondered at that the

* Not only Marie Antoinette, but Madame Elizabeth, impute Necker's resignation to personal fear. The queen writes: "La facilité que les séditieux ont trouvée à effrayer M. Necker leur donnera du courage." The princess says: "M. Necker est parti. Il a eu une si belle peur d'être pendu qu'il n'a pu résister à la tendresse de sa vertueuse épouse, qui le pressait d'aller aux eaux. L'Assemblée en lisant cette phrase a ri, et passé à l'ordre du jour."—"Marie Antoinette," &c., 218, 219.

members present were moved to more laughter than sympathy by this sentimental effusion, and passed on to the order of the day; and certainly, if the letter afforded an additional proof of his amiable disposition, it supplied one at least equally strong of his weakness of character and consequent unfitness for the time. It was more to his credit, it was indeed a singular and striking evidence of his integrity and disinterestedness, that he at the same time placed in the hands of the Assembly a sum of two millions of livres to cover any incorrectness that might be suspected in his accounts, and any loss from the depreciation of the paper money* lately issued under his administration, though not with his approbation. He retired towards his native country of Switzerland; but before he reached it he received a proof that the loss of his popularity was greater than he had imagined, for when he reached Arcis-sur-Aube he was arrested by the municipal authorities, who were too good patriots to conceive it possible that he could have fallen into disgrace with the Assembly except through his own fault. Some thought he had proved a traitor, and had attempted to sacrifice the cause of the nation to the interests of the king; others branded him as a thief, and suspected him of having carried off large sums belonging to the treasury. He was detained till the pleasure of the Assembly as to his movements could be learnt, and was dismissed in safety as soon as its permission was received. He had certainly consulted his own safety and subsequent happiness by his retirement; he lived for the next fourteen years at Coppet, being just permitted to see the utter overthrow of all the dreams of the first revolutionists, in the

* Madame de Staël, i. 393.

establishment under the name of the empire of a despotism infinitely more all-pervading and stringent than even Richelieu had conceived. He had made the acquaintance of the new emperor during his Italian campaigns, and in an elaborate treatise on finance and government had extolled his talents, partly in the hope of obtaining leave to return to France. In this hope he was disappointed, for his virtues as well as his defects were exactly those for which Napoleon had no toleration. But he had no real cause to regret the rejection of his request; in the autumn of 1804 he died, having certainly earned the reputation which his daughter claims for him of an upright, conscientious, and amiable man; but it may be with equal certainty affirmed, in spite of considerable financial abilities, having established no title to the praise of a great minister.

With Necker all his colleagues also retired, except M. Montmorin, who retained the portfolio of foreign affairs. The queen had been apprehensive that the Assembly would interfere to prevent the appointment of successors to them, preferring to manage affairs for the future by committees taken from its own body. And the length of time which elapsed before a new ministry was formed might have led others to the same conclusion. But the leaders of the Assembly could accomplish their ends better by having in office creatures of their own, on whose zeal for democracy or on whose weakness they could rely for co-operation, or at least for non-resistance. The king himself had no voice whatever in the selection; and what is more remarkable, as a proof that Mirabeau had overrated his power in the Assembly, he had none either. He was endeavouring to maintain his influence by a lavish expenditure and a liberal hospitality, for which the

court now supplied the means; and, having quitted the Jacobins, he had joined a new club, known as that of 1789, of which Lafayette, Bailly, Sièyes, Talleyrand, and other professed constitutionalists, were members. But even there Lafayette's influence was superior to his. And when at last, in November, a new ministry was formed, two at least of its members owed their seats to the General's patronage; Duport du Tertre, the keeper of the seals, and, when a few weeks afterwards that great office was abolished, minister of justice; and Duportail, the minister of war. Two more, Lambert, controller of finance, and Fleurieu, minister of marine, were supposed by Barnave and his friends to be staunch adherents of their party; as indeed they proved. One was supposed to owe his appointment to the address of M. Montmorin. De Lessart, the new minister of the interior, had been a friend of Necker, and so far neither unfriendly to nor unacceptable to the king; he wished, indeed, at all times to consult his wishes and to uphold his authority; but he was a man of but limited abilities, and was so overborne by his colleagues, that his presence in the council brought little strength to the royal cause.

Little inclined as Louis was to stand upon his dignity, these arrangements, in which his feelings were in no degree consulted, and for which his sanction was scarcely asked, added to his uneasiness by the proof which they afforded to the whole world of his impotence and utter helplessness. And his distress was increased beyond measure at the end of November by a fresh attack on the clergy whom he considered it the most sacred of all his duties to protect. The Assembly was not satisfied with stripping them of their property, and commuting it for an inadequate pittance, but framed a new ecclesiastical constitution, reducing

the number of bishops, (which indeed in France, as in all other Catholic countries, had been unreasonably excessive), depriving the king and the Pope of their ecclesiastical patronage, which they vested in the municipal authorities, and generally subordinating the church to the civil law; and, having completed these arrangements, which to a conscientious Papist bore the character of sacrilege, they required the whole body of the clergy to accept them, and take an oath to observe them faithfully. In the whole kingdom there was no man whose religious convictions were deeper or more sincere than those of Louis himself. Many of the chief prelates in their despair appealed to him as their protector. Mirabeau's conduct was partly hostile to the church and partly friendly. He was willing to strip it of its property, exciting its spoilers to additional rancour by reminding them of the massacre of St. Bartholomew, which he ascribed to the influence of the priests. On the question whether they should be compelled to take the oath, which in some parts was inconsistent with the maintenance of their connexion with Rome, under penalty of instant banishment if they refused, he took their part; but unluckily his voice was less powerful as their champion than as their assailant. Louis was in extreme perplexity and distress; he doubted if, as a faithful servant of the church, he could forbear to exercise his veto when the decree establishing the oath should be brought to him for his sanction; and at the same time, as he was aware that such a step on his part would be considered a declaration of war by the Assembly, he conceived the idea of extricating himself from the necessity by procuring the aid of foreign princes. With this view, almost as soon as the proposal was mooted in the Assembly, besides sending

a trusty agent to consult the Pope, he conferred on the Baron de Breteuil, who still retained his post as minister of his household, full power to treat with such princes as might be willing to exert themselves in his cause. And he wrote with his own hand to all the sovereigns of the continent,* urging them to form some combined plan for his deliverance. He felt the more pressing need of procuring speedy assistance, because his personal situation was becoming daily more irksome. He had begun of late to feel himself more completely a prisoner. By some means or other a rumour of his desire to quit Paris and its neighbourhood had got abroad, and though Lafayette professed to discredit it as absurd,† it led him to set a rigorous watch over his movements, which were not rendered more tolerable by any amenities of manner; for Lafayette at all times rather prided himself on his want of courtly refinement, as if asperity and boorishness were proofs of patriotism and integrity.

The historians of the democratic party have de-

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* Lamartine, v. 13, gives at length the letter to the King of Prussia, in which, among other things, Louis affirms that, "in spite of his having accepted the new Constitution, the factious portion of his subjects openly manifest their intention of destroying the remainder of the monarchy" . . . and suggests the idea of a "congress of the principal powers of Europe, supported by an armed force, as the best measure to check the progress of faction here, to afford the means of establishing a better order of things, and preventing the evils that devour this country from seizing on the other states of Europe." One copy of the letter, which is dated Dec. 3, 1790, is in the archives of Berlin.

† See his letter to De Bouillé, date Oct. 5, 1790, and the information given De Bouillé by the Bishop of Pamiers. "L'évêque de Pamiers me fit le tableau de la situation malheureux de ce prince et de la famille royale . . . . que la rigueur et dureté de Lafayette, devenu leur géolier, rendait de jour en jour plus insupportable."—"Mém. de De Bouillé, p. 175, 181. Even earlier in the year, before the outbreak at Metz, De Bouillé considered that "sa popularité [de Lafayette] dependait plutôt de la captivité du roi, qu'il tenait prisonnier et qui était sous sa garde, que de sa force personnelle, qui n'avait plus d'autre appui que la milice Parisienne."—Ibid. 130.

nounced with great severity the act of Louis in thus appealing for aid to foreign sovereigns, as an act of bad faith to his people, and a proof of his meditating a counter-revolution. Their arguments are plausible, but their condemnation of the king's conduct seems undeserved. In one point of view, Louis could not be guilty of bad faith towards his subjects, for they had insultingly refused to trust him; in another he was not, for all his public professions of willingness to renounce prerogatives of his own which seemed inconsistent with the perfect liberty of his people and to reform general abuses, he had not only fulfilled but exceeded. It is equally certain that he did not contemplate a counter-revolution, if such an expression implies a repeal by his own authority of any enactment of the Assembly to which he had already assented. It would not be difficult to justify him even if he had meditated such a step, for he would only have been accomplishing the secret desire of a great portion, perhaps of a majority of the Assembly, who highly disapproved of much that had been done, though the violence of the democratic party had extorted their consent to it; and it has been seen that Mirabeau considered the revocation of some measures which had been passed indispensable not only to the preservation of the crown but to the welfare of the people.* But to every sanction which he had once given Louis considered himself irrevocably bound both in policy and in honour to adhere. Such was his constant language to his ministers and his family; nor is there to be found in the despatches of De Breteuil to the foreign courts to which he was accredited the slightest trace of any

* A letter from Count Beauharnais (the first husband of the Empress Josephine) to M. de Bouillé, date July 16, 1791, shows that even after the

intention to undo what had been done. Even the decrees for the confiscation of ecclesiastical property, to which his assent had just been extorted, grievous above all other measures as that had been to his feelings, he had no longer any wish to annul, hoping rather by his acquiescence on that point to obtain a compromise with respect to the oath which the ultra-party in the Assembly wished to impose on the clergy, and to which, since he looked upon it as a virtual extinction of the dependence of the church on the Pope, he was resolved not to consent.

But though the king's conduct in thus inviting foreign aid was not inconsistent with any duty which he owed to his subjects, on the score of policy and statesmanship it is not equally unimpeachable. He may indeed be excused for failing to anticipate the vacillation mingled with rashness, and the folly which, while pouring forth impotent menaces, at the same time betrayed their utter selfishness, which distinguished the whole behaviour of the German sovereigns when at last they were forced into action. But when he began to trust to strangers instead of himself for extinguishing or quelling the disaffection existing among his people, he was sharpening a weapon which could hardly fail to be fatal to himself, to exasperate rather than to terrify those against whom it should be employed. It is true that he was surrounded by unusual difficulties. Of his army, a considerable portion

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king's return from Varennes, when matters had gone much further, there was still a large party (he represents it as irresistibly strong) desirous to modify many articles of the Constitution, which only a very few ultra-liberals (à cinq ou six extravagans près) wished to see adopted."—"Mémoires de De Bouillé," p. 258–267, especially p. 262.

* See letter of De Breteuil to De Mercy, without date, but written in Jan. 1791.—"Marie Antoinette," &c. i. 426.

was disaffected; of a large body of his nobles, on whose fidelity to his cause full reliance could have been placed, since their interest was indissolubly bound up with his own, he was deprived of the support by their emigration. But could he have even now resolved to rely on himself, these embarrassments would in a great degree have disappeared. The ease with which De Bouillé had quelled the revolt of Nancy, the sincerity of the repentance of the mutineers at Metz, showed what power the instinct of military discipline still had over even the most disaffected, and how surely all but the very worst regiments might have been trusted to respond to any call made on their loyalty by their sovereign in person. Of the troops in and around the capital there were still many whose subsequent conduct showed that they only needed a loyal and determined leader.* And had Louis, instead of appealing to foreign princes for aid, shaken off the scruples of an over-tender conscience, and, recollecting that to resist unlawful encroachments on his authority is a sovereign's duty to his subjects as well as to himself, thrown himself boldly and frankly on his people, it is almost certain that at this period he would have received an amount of support sufficient to establish him as a constitutional king, with all the power which he desired. At least half the army, and more than half the Assembly, would have rallied round him; the emigrants, in themselves a considerable force, would probably have returned; and their watchword, 'The justice of the royal

* So little indeed did the chiefs of the revolutionary party think that they could trust the troops of the regular army, that De Bouillé tells us that in the spring of 1790, "Il avait été question effectivement de licencier l'armée, et d'en former une sur ces principes de la révolution; c'était l'opinion de M. de Mirabeau" (before Mirabeau joined the court).—Mémoires de De Bouillé. We learn from the same source that nearly the whole of the cavalry was loyal.

cause,' would not have been an unmeaning or powerless phrase, but would have given distinctness and unity to their views; while the malcontents would have been enfeebled in many instances by unavoidable doubts of conscience and by their own divisions of opinion as to the objects to be pursued.

If it be replied that before he could be capable of adopting so resolute a course of action Louis must have changed his whole character, such an objection is indeed an impeachment of him, or rather an assertion that in troubled and stormy times virtues unaccompanied by talents and firmness will not qualify a prince to rule over an excited people; but is no refutation whatever of the general principle of policy that the one condition indispensable to allay discontent or to quell sedition is that no extraneous power shall ever be suffered to come between a sovereign and his people.

No injurious effects, however, practically resulted from this negotiation with the German sovereigns, since his secret was so well kept that no knowledge of it reached the popular party. Their fury if it had been revealed to them may be estimated by the violence of a measure which, at the beginning of the next year, they proposed against the emigrants. The zeal for emigration had been quickened by the increased severity of the enactments against the clergy, and the relentless rigour with which those enactments were enforced. At the end of November Louis had so far yielded as to give his assent to the decree enjoining the clergy to take the oath to the ecclesiastical constitution; which, however, unless some time were fixed within which the oath should be taken, and some especial penalty imposed on disobedience, he hoped might be allowed to lie dormant; trusting even, that when

he had ceased to resist the will of the Assembly, that body might itself be willing to admit of some compromise. Accordingly, in the first week of January Cazalès made a powerful appeal to his brother deputies, urging upon them that to insist on the oath in the form in which it had been enacted would be to cause a deplorable schism in the church, since the great majority of the clergy of every rank regarded it as wholly contrary to their religion, and would therefore never be induced to take it; and the Bishop of Clermont proposed a substitute for it, which was equally forcible and stringent in the words in which it pledged the clergy to accept the constitution, and which differed from it only in "excepting formally the matters which depend essentially on the spiritual authority." The proposal only exasperated their enemies to show their strength without delay. Barnave instantly made a counter motion that the oath should be taken by all before the next evening, on pain of deprivation; and the President of the Assembly called over the roll of all the ecclesiastical members, and ordered them to take it at once. He would not even permit a discussion of the question. The Bishop of Agen demanded permission to speak; but his demand was the signal for such an uproar as had not been witnessed in the Assembly since the mob broke in upon its deliberations at Versailles. The deputies on the Left rose in a body, shouting, "No speech; will you take the oath or not?" The mob in the galleries was still more loud and furious: "To the lamp-post with all who refuse;" and as prelate after prelate, and vicar after vicar refused, they repeated the ferocious cry, "to the lamp-post." One priest, named Le Clerc, was commencing his refusal with an explanation of the obligations which he conceived to be imposed upon

him as a member of the church, but his voice was drowned in menaces, which provoked a deputy to remind the Assembly that even the Roman emperors had not forbidden the martyrs whom they were slaughtering to pronounce the name of their God. Talleyrand and three or four of the parochial clergy of the metropolis had taken it on its first enactment; but they had few imitators. Of all the clergy who were deputies only one, a parochial priest named Landrin, took the oath; and those who followed his example out of doors were not estimated at one-sixth of the body. Of prelates, besides Talleyrand, there were but two, the Cardinal de Brienne, archbishop of Sens, and the Bishop of Orleans. The rest were instantly deprived of their preferments, and reduced to beggary.

A large proportion fled the kingdom, accompanied by many of their flocks, who, since the Pope condemned the clergy who took the oath, could not reconcile it to their consciences to stay and receive the rites of the church from ministers under his ban. It was not strange that the Assembly should regard emigration with deep resentment. It was not only an avowal of an uncompromising resistance to their will, and a weakening of the country by the loss of a large body of men of abilities and character, but it was also a menace; for the bulk of those who had so fled, among whom were very many officers of experience and renown, were assembled at Coblentz, under the princes of the house of Condé, and were undisguisedly eager to recover their position in their native land by force of arms. But their first display of disapproval of the emigration was calculated to excite only ridicule. The Princesses Adelaide and Victoire, daughters of the last and aunts of the present king, shared the scruples of those who feared to

receive the sacraments of the church from clergy who had taken the oath denounced by the Pope, and, though their royal nephew earnestly remonstrated against such a step, determined to repair to Rome itself, to practise their religion in safety. In spite of their passports the municipal authorities at Moret would have stopped them had not a troop of dragoons, indignant at such an insult to the family of the king, come to their rescue; and two days afterwards when they reached Arnay-le-Duc, the populace did unharness their horses and detain them by force. They appealed by letter to the Assembly, and Alexander Lameth and his party were not ashamed to argue that the public safety required that the princesses should be sent back to Paris. They overshot the mark. Mirabeau came to the support of the princesses, ridiculed with great wit the idea that the public safety could possibly be concerned in any movements of "two princesses of advanced age and timorous consciences;" warned them that they would make the people distrust liberty if it saw such acts of tyranny justified by an appeal to its name; and procured not only the rejection of Lameth's proposal, but a few days afterwards the defeat also of a bill against the whole body of emigrants, which was brought in by the same party, and which proposed to enact that a board of three persons should be constituted with absolute authority to decide on the case of every French subject who was absent from the country; and that all who, on being summoned by it to return, should decline or delay to obey, should be deprived of all their rights of citizenship, and have all their property confiscated. Against this motion, too, Mirabeau thundered in a high style of dignified though vehement eloquence. He was conscious of and justified his vehemence by avowing

that he should be ashamed of himself if his indignation were not moved by the proposal of so atrocious, so tyrannical a measure. If he were risking his popularity, he desired none but such as was founded on his support of the unalterable principles of justice and freedom. Those whom he was now opposing had, he affirmed, only learnt to pretend a passion for liberty long since he had been known to all France as her champion; and when they, irritated at the impression he was evidently making on the Assembly, tried to drown his voice by murmurs, he turned upon them still more fiercely, and for once cowed them into submission by his disdainful proclamation of their insignificance. "Silence," he shouted, "you thirty voices;" and they were silent, and the bill was lost.

But these occasional triumphs of his eloquence could not save the king from further encroachments on his rights, and from grosser insults, if indeed they did not stimulate them, from the jealousy with which they inspired Lafayette. That officer's conduct was apparently regulated by a desire to make both king and Assembly feel their dependence on him; and in his efforts to accomplish this object his conduct during this year became more inconsistent and feeble than ever. More than ever did he deal in half measures, seeking to counterbalance a check given to the one side by a blow inflicted on the other, without ever venturing to make either check or blow decisive; the result was that he only irritated the Assembly and the populace, while he injured the king and himself. The king, by this irritation of the Assembly and the encouragement of further attempts to abridge his authority, and even his freedom of personal action, which Lafayette's forbearance to chastise such attempts when it was in his power, tacitly gave: himself, by the degree to

which his repeated displays of insincerity and irresolution diminished his influence with every party till at last, as will be seen, he so completely lost the popularity which he had at first enjoyed, and the insatiable craving for which was his main-spring of action, that he was forced to flee the kingdom to save his own life from those to whom he had already sacrificed the king.

On the last day of February, 1791, a sudden whim seized the mob of Paris to destroy the castle at Vincennes as they had destroyed the Bastille, though it was now neither fortress nor prison, but was entirely empty. The leaders of the Jacobins, who were their prompters, probably thought it necessary to keep up their excitement by from time to time suggesting fresh objects for their fury. Santerre again was their leader. They had laid their hands on all that was worth pillaging, and were beginning the work of demolition, when Lafayette arrived with the national guard, dispersed the rioters, and saved the old fortress; that it might become hereafter the scene of a still fouler crime than any which it had witnessed. He did not succeed without difficulty, and even danger; for some of his soldiers positively refused to act, and some of the mob ventured to fire upon him, severely wounding one of his officers. Some of his staff urged him to follow up his success by marching at once into Paris, and seizing the Jacobin demagogues who had caused the riot; an act which, at the moment, the majority of the citizens, in their terror of Santerre and his ruffians, would gladly have supported. He rejected their counsel, and preferred finishing the day with an insult to the king. Vague and incorrect rumours of the tumult and its object had got abroad. It was said that an assassin had been stopped while endea-

vouring to force his way into the Tuilleries; and the report reached a number of the nobles, who at once armed themselves and hastened to the palace to protect their sovereign. It was not strange that Louis and Marie Antoinette should receive them graciously. They had not of late been used to such warm-hearted and prompt displays of attachment; but the companies of the national guard which were on duty at the palace were jealous at the reception accorded them. They declared that the king was sufficiently safe under their protection, and hinted that such a sudden concourse of armed men had some further secret object. A vast mob, of whom the greater part were drunk, had got into the outer courts of the palace, and were repeating their usual cry of "to the lamp-post with the aristocrats." Louis became alarmed for the safety of his friends. To appease the national guard he commanded them to lay aside their arms, which were only pistols, small-swords, and daggers; and they had hardly done so when Lafayette arrived at the palace. He knew that both the lower classes of the city and many of his own soldiers were dissatisfied at his work of the morning; and, to recover their goodwill, he now handed the weapons of the nobles over to the national guards; and after reproaching the nobles themselves as interfering with the duties of his troops, he drove them downstairs, defenceless as they were, among the drunken and infuriated mob. They were hooted as knights of the dagger, and several were maltreated; but he made no attempt to protect them, and the next day he further insulted them by publishing a general order in which he stigmatized their conduct as indecent; pronounced the zeal with which they had been animated to have been suspicious, and enjoined all those in the highest authority about the palace to take care

that such persons did not find entrance into it in future. "The king of the Constitution ought not," he said, "to be surrounded by any defenders but the soldiers of liberty."

Among those who had thus put themselves forward as the champions of their king was D'Epresménil, the fiery leader of the first clamourers for reform, and the meeting of the States-General; but who had long since seen that what was endangered by the proceedings of that body was not the liberty of the people but the safety of the monarchy. He was now more an object of hatred to the mob than he had ever been of their idolatry; and some of the ruffians around the palace singled him out as their mark, and were treating him with a roughness which might have been fatal, when he was rescued by the Jacobin Pétion. In the midst of his gratitude, he could not forbear warning his preserver of the fleeting character of popularity such as he had once enjoyed, and which now seemed to belong to his preserver. "I, too," said he, "have been carried on the shoulders of my countrymen." And the day came when Pétion must have remembered the warning, with the greater poignancy that he must have remembered also many an atrocity and crime which did not sully the fame nor disturb the conscience of the persecuted and doomed young noble.

Though the general order alleged that the king had sanctioned the steps which Lafayette had taken, it was so impossible to believe that Louis had willingly seen his faithful servants thus outraged, that the events of the day were not unnaturally interpreted as an assurance of impunity to every insult which might tend to complete and demonstrate the helplessness of the king. Lafayette, too, had forborne to punish the soldiers who had misbehaved at Vincennes; and whether his

conduct was to be attributed to fear of offending them, or to a secret sympathy with their political feelings, it was equally encouraging to the disaffected. Before Easter, both mob and national guard had an opportunity of showing the view they took of it. Louis desired earnestly to receive the sacrament at Easter; and consulted the Bishop of Clermont on the subject. We have seen that that prelate had just given such a proof of his resolute conscientiousness as rather to surrender all his preferments than make a concession inconsistent with his duty; but he now displayed a narrow-minded bigotry with which even in him it is hard to sympathize; and he discouraged the king's pious purpose, on the ground of the scandal he had recently given to devout Catholics by sanctioning the oath.* Louis, however, became only the more anxious to spend a short time in tranquillity and holy meditation; and, as the tumults of the disaffected city were little favorable for such a purpose, he resolved to pass a fortnight at St. Cloud. But when he was preparing to set out, the mob stopped the horses, and refused to let them move. The national guards united with them, and refused to pay the slightest attention to Lafayette's orders. It was in vain he expostulated with them on the impolicy of allowing the royalists to represent the king as a prisoner. He was undoubtedly sincere for the moment, for the influence which he was anxious to preserve over Louis was endangered, if he should prove to be unable to protect him. And at last, when his arguments and entreaties were disregarded, he offered, at the head of his staff, to cut a way through the rioters for the royal carriage. Louis was as averse as ever to bloodshed; and after the

* Both the letter of the king and the reply of the bishop are given at length by Lacretelle, viii. 220-226.

scene of February, he and the queen distrusted Lafayette more than ever. They dismounted from the carriage; and the next day Louis appealed to the Assembly, who took no notice of his complaint. While Lafayette, as if he had repented of his zeal in his cause, after a show of resigning his post of commander-in-chief of the national guard, on the ground that it would no longer obey him, easily allowed himself to be persuaded to resume it.

It was but natural that the compulsion thus exerted over him, the most flagrant and open attack that had been made on his liberty of action since his arrival in Paris, should have led Louis to resume, with greater determination than ever, his project of escaping altogether from the city and its neighbourhood. But he had no longer the assistance of the original projector of such an enterprise. Mirabeau was dead. About the middle of March he had been seized with an indisposition which at first was little more than languor, but which soon became accompanied with severe suffering. If he had believed in slow poisons, he should have fancied, he said, that he had been poisoned.* He had received both warnings and threats of plots having been formed for his assassination. But in truth, the decay of his strength did not require such an explanation. His early excesses could hardly have failed to weaken his constitution, and latterly the state of political excitement in which he had lived, and his prodigious industry and continued exertions, were equally sufficient to wear him out. Though temperate in drinking, he was an enormous eater; his figure showed a tendency to apoplexy, and for many weeks his blood had been in such a state

* Dumont, p. 185.

that, in the interval between the morning and evening sitting of the Assembly, the doctors found it necessary to apply leeches to his neck; and at night, while he was electrifying his hearers with his harangues, the blood was oozing through the bandages in which he was enveloped. Before the end of the month the skill of the physicians was exhausted, they could do no more for him; he had foreseen their decision before they announced it, and his last days presented a singular mixture of patriotic wisdom, self-confidence, hardihood, and mocking impiety. His favourite subjects of discourse were the condition of his country, and the services he could have rendered it had his life been prolonged. He foreboded for France nothing but misfortunes, and traced them all to the assumption by the States-General of the title of the National Assembly. Ever since they had gained the victory they had not ceased to show themselves unworthy of it, wishing to govern the king instead of governing by him. And, as if the approach of death had given him a clearer insight into the future, he added, "Soon it will be neither they nor he who will govern; a vile faction will get the mastery of them all, and cover France with horrors."* But when he spoke of himself, his language always was that he could have saved the country if he had lived. That hereafter his countrymen would know his value. In one of his paroxysms of agony his servant was supporting his head: "Would," said he, "that I could bequeath that head to you, it would be of service to my country." Talleyrand was the most constant and attentive visitor of his death-bed; and with him he conversed chiefly on foreign politics, paying little regard to the continental sovereigns, but speaking of

* Dumont, p. 186.

England as the power whose movements should be most steadily kept in view. "Pitt," said he, "is the man who will gain most by my death, for there is no one else in Europe who can counterbalance his ascendancy." And he gave Talleyrand an elaborately drawn paper, which he charged him after he was gone to read to the Assembly as his last legacy to his brother deputies.* At times his agonies were so great that he wished he were dead, and even argued with his physician that, as his recovery was hopeless, he ought not to hesitate to give him opium to end the scene. But during his intervals of relief, and towards the last, when mortification had set in and lulled his pain, he put on an air of bravado, and seemed to wish to die like an epicurean of the days of paganism. Talleyrand, who never let regard for a friend check a sarcasm or soften a sneer, said that he acted his death.† "Away," said he, "with these trappings of death and woe. Take away these useless phials, and bring me flowers and sweet perfumes. Dress my hair. Let me fall asleep to the strains of harmonious music." At one moment the firing of some recruits at exercise was heard in the distance; to his boastful fancy they seemed to be preparing the funeral of Achilles. On the morning of the 2nd of April the sun rose brilliantly. He cast his dying look

* Dumont, p. 216. Dumont adds, "Ce discours était, à ma connaissance intime, un ouvrage de M. Reyborg. . . . Il est remarquable que jusqu'à son lit de mort il ait conservé ce désir de gloire empruntée." In earlier chapters Dumont affirms that many of his speeches were written for him by himself and others. But it seems hardly credible that this statement should not be a great exaggeration. That others collected facts to form the groundwork of his speeches is highly probable, and they may at times have suggested arguments; but it is inconceivable that any one could have produced such an effect as Mirabeau certainly did by reading or reciting the essays of others. Moreover, some of his best speeches were manifestly bursts of extemporaneous eloquence.

† "Il a dramatisé sa mort," was his expression to Dumont, ibid. 216.

towards it, unable, even while gaining a transient enjoyment from its beams, to suppress the scepticism of his soul. "If the sun be not God, surely it is his cousin."* They were nearly his last words. At half-past eight the watchers by his bedside saw a look of greater tranquillity steal over his face. He was dead.

Never in the history of the nation had any event of any kind produced so great an impression. From the hour when first his illness was ascertained to be dangerous the interest felt in his state had been all-absorbing. The whole street from morning to night had been crowded with inquirers, messengers from the palace being amongst the most assiduous; and bulletins had been issued three and four times a day, as if a king had been the patient. And when at last all was over, for a moment it seemed as if the whole nation were sobered by the shock. Thoughts of business and of amusement were laid aside, even the fury of political excitement was lulled; the theatres were closed; the National Assembly was adjourned; for almost every one regretted him with sincere grief, and those who did not, who were only a small knot of the most furious Jacobins, did not dare to show their want of sympathy with the universal feeling, but simulated an affliction as deep as that of the rest. The deputies of the Assembly mourned for him, as for one who had been indisputably the chief pride and strength of their body. He had been so sagacious and comprehensive in his views, so great, so irresistible in his eloquence, that even those whose arguments had been overpowered, whose designs had been thwarted by his opposition, felt no shame at being vanquished by such

* "Journal de la maladie de Mirabeau," par M. Calanis. Quoted by Carlyle, ii. 196.

an antagonist; while all but the most violent felt that to him, more than any one else, they owed their existence in their present form, and the Constitution from which they hoped so much for the future. The court party, and above all the king and queen themselves, mourned for him * as the sole prop of their falling dignity. The more keenly they felt the degradation of their existing situation, the more confidently did they trust that he to whose original hostility they ascribed it, would be able, now that he had repented of his former policy, to re-establish their legitimate authority. Most of all did the populace mourn for him. They did not trouble themselves about the details of his conduct. They did not ask whether he had denounced the clergy or defended the emigrants: or even whether he was now taking counsel with the queen, and connecting his own interests with those of the monarchy. To them he was the personification of the Revolution as a whole. To him, as it seemed, they owed the abolition of corvées, the destruction of the Bastille. Through him they doubted not to procure everything that was still necessary to the completeness of their freedom.

For a day and a half he lay in state, and on the evening of the 4th of April he was borne to the grave with a pomp that might have befitted the proudest sovereign. The ministers of the king, the deputies of the Assembly, the members of the municipal council, the magistrates of the department, led the procession, which extended the whole distance from his house in the Rue Chaussée d'Antin to the church of St. Eustache. Twenty

* "La reine le regretta, et s'étonnait elle-même en parlant de ses regrets. Mais elle avait espéré que celui-là seulement qui avait eu l'adresse et la force de tous des organisers aurait pu avoir celle de réparer le mal causé par son funeste génie."—Madame de Campan, c. xvii.

thousand national guards lined the streets, and behind them was closely packed a dense concourse of people from the rest of the city and from the surrounding district; for from miles around the adjacent villages and towns had poured in their inhabitants to do honour to the dead. Every window and balcony was filled with spectators, every house-top was covered; and not only from the citizens, to whom his aspect and voice were familiar, but even from those who had never seen nor heard him tears flowed plenteously, and sobs mingled audibly with the rolling of the funeral drums and the melancholy chant of hundreds of priests. At the church of St. Eustache the procession halted while a celebrated preacher, Father Cerutti, who had formerly belonged to the order of Jesuits, delivered a funeral oration. And it was midnight before it reached the place of interment. By a decree of the Assembly, passed on the preceding day, the church of Ste. Geneviève had been renamed the Pantheon, and appropriated as a cemetery for such of her illustrious sons as France might hereafter think deserving of the national gratitude. Descartes, the glory of French science, had been buried there; and by his side Mirabeau was now laid with a pomp which was not, in the eyes of his countrymen, more extraordinary in that the grief which had dictated it was for the time real, than because it was the first instance of honours being conferred on a man whose acts had been those of peace, which had previously been reserved for the heroes of the sword.*

The friend who has shown the greatest affection for

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* "C'était la première fois en France qu'un homme célèbre par ses écrits et par son éloquence recevait des honneurs qu'on n'accordait jadis qu'aux grands seigneurs ou aux guerriers."—Madame de Staël, i. 409.

the memory of Mirabeau and the most careful solicitude for his reputation, while neither disguising his faults from himself nor from others, (and indeed in a case where so much blame was undeniably due an indulgent candour was the most judicious policy,) has contended* that, had he lived, he would have established his claim to the gratitude of his country by arresting the downward course of the Revolution, and consolidating the constitution, which at his death had not received its final revision, on a moderate, safe, and practicable foundation, giving abundant security at once for the rights of the sovereign and the liberties of the people. In his view Mirabeau would have been able either to keep the Jacobins in order, or, if he had failed to do so, to crush them. Tracing the chief of the evils which ensued after his death to the folly of the Assembly in incapacitating its members for re-election, he affirms that Mirabeau would always have been able to prevent the passing of so absurd and suicidal a vote, of which, indeed, he had already twice procured the rejection. We may admit that if such a salvation could have been possible for the country, he alone was the man who could have brought it out. Yet to believe that even he could have done so when the struggle had gone so far, and when so much had been done that was both ruinous and irrevocable, seems to attribute too much to one man; even Hector himself despaired of Troy after the enemy was within the walls. It must be remembered that Mirabeau had already often been outvoted in the Assembly, and, if he could have saved the country, it must probably have been by overawing the Assembly through the populace, whose attachment to him was enthusiastic

* Dumont, p. 201.

and as yet undiminished. But even that attachment might not have stood the test to which he was about to expose it. We know the measure which he proposed as the first and most indispensable step to be adopted by the king, his escape towards the frontier to join his army. But he had scarcely been dead a fortnight when, as we have seen, the whole populace of the city rose in a frenzy to prevent Louis from going to St. Cloud; and can we think that even Mirabeau's influence could have so changed all their notions as to lead them to view with anything but the most furious rage his departure from the neighbourhood altogether, throwing himself on the support of his army and of the very general who, from his previous exertions in the cause of order and loyalty, was of all men the most obnoxious to them? If, as Mirabeau proposed, he had himself remained in Paris to manage the Assembly, there would have been no lack of demagogues to remind the people that he had formerly thought Versailles too far from Paris for the king's residence; and it is at least as likely that, being looked upon as the author of his flight, he would have been the first victim to their fury. It is true that there were afterwards moments of reaction which such a speaker and such a statesman might have foreseen and improved; for he alone in the kingdom saw beyond the present day, and discerned the consequences of his own and of his adversaries' measures. But it would not have been sufficient to arrest the progress of the Revolution unless he had been able to turn it back upon its course. The nobility was gone; he had acquiesced in its abolition. The church was gone; none had aimed heavier or more effective blows at it than himself. How could he undo his own acts? And, if he

could not, without those pillars how could any monarchy endure? much more, how could any monarchy which had once fallen be re-established in its proper authority? That he would have striven zealously and honestly and most ably for the welfare of the king and country cannot be doubted, but it seems not so probable that he would have succeeded as that he would have added one more to the list of those politicians who, having allowed their own selfish objects to carry them beyond the limits of prudence or justice, have afterwards found it impossible to retrace their steps; but have learnt to their sorrow and shame that their rashness has but led to the disappointment of their hopes, the permanent downfall of their own reputation, and the ruin of what they would gladly have defended and preserved. And on the whole it is well that from time to time such lessons should be impressed upon the world. It is well that men of lofty genius and pure patriotism should learn equally with the most shallow empiric or the most self-seeking demagogue that false steps in politics can rarely be retraced; that concessions once made can seldom if ever be recalled; but are usually the sure stepping-stones to others still more extensive; that what is easy to preserve or to destroy is commonly impossible to repair or to restore. And of such lessons in the history of the world no event is so prolific as the French Revolution. It is a singular sequel to the magnificence of Mirabeau's funeral, and a striking warning of the fleeting nature of the popularity of even the most brilliant demagogue, that he was not suffered long to lie in the tomb which the enthusiasm of the nation had now provided for him. Little more than three years afterwards the Convention which then reigned supreme in France,

after overthrowing the Jacobins, on whose defeat he himself had of late been so earnestly bent, branded his memory also as that of a traitor to his country; pronounced him unworthy of a resting-place in the national temple, and removed his body with every mark of insult and ignominy to Clamart on the Faubourg St. Marceau, the cemetery set apart for those who have died by the sentence of justice and the hand of the public executioner.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

It is very probable that Mirabeau, had he lived, might have been able to prevent the Assembly from identifying itself as it proceeded to do with the outrage of the mob which prevented the king from going to St. Cloud. But now no deputy of any weight dared lift up his voice even to preserve to Louis the ordinary liberty which was the right of every citizen; while as if for the purpose of adding one more indignity to those which he had already suffered, the Assembly, through that section of the ministry which it had imposed on him, compelled him the next week to despatch a circular letter to his ambassadors at the different foreign courts, expressing his full approval of the Constitution, his resolution in all respects to maintain it, his delight at his new position as "the first public functionary" of the nation; his entire liberty of thought and action; and his indignation at the enemies of the Revolution, and especially the emigrants, who, from selfish motives regretting the abuses of the ancient Government, represented him as shorn of his legitimate authority, of his royal dignity, and of his personal freedom.* It is hard to conceive what purpose, except that of insulting the feelings of Louis, could have been intended to be served by such

* The whole letter is given by Lacretelle in his appendix to vol. viii.

a letter, which could not impose on a single human being in or out of France. He felt it so keenly that he refused to alter a word of the draft, thus leaving the whole responsibility on its authors; and Montmorin, to whose office it belonged to sign it, was only prevailed on by him to do so, instead of resigning his post as he would have preferred doing, that he might not by retiring leave his unhappy master without a single friendly adviser of his own choice. Even this was not the last insult in store for him; he had hardly been compelled to assert his entire liberty when at the end of April a decree prohibiting him from moving more than twenty leagues from Paris passed the Assembly without opposition; and though it could not have the force of law till he had given his assent to it, and could not in reality abridge his freedom more than the violence of the mob, for which not one individual was punished or even prosecuted, had already abridged it, such a public declaration of the right of the Assembly to confine him naturally made him more anxious to escape from such unroyal thraldom. He had some reason, too, to doubt whether the Tuilleries would much longer be a safe abode for him. A fresh Club, from its place of meeting in a Franciscan convent known as the Cordeliers, had lately been established by a butcher named Legendre. Brutal in his manners, savage in his temper, and utterly illiterate, boasting that he was a striker not a speaker, he found his very ruffianism a recommendation and a power among men who, like Danton and Marat, looked on even the Jacobin Club as not sufficiently energetic and merciless in action.* Danton became its pre-

* Lamartine calls it "the club of *coup de mains*," as the Jacobins was the club of radical theories, xvi. 4; English Transl. i. 483.

sident, and affirming that of the priests who had been deprived of their benefices as nonjurors many were sheltered in the Tuileries, he was constantly threatening to storm the palace and drag them forth to deliver them to the people.

By the end of May the general outline of the plan for the escape of the royal family was decided on. It was an undertaking of great difficulty for many reasons; one of those most apparent being the necessity of its being confided to many persons, and the danger that the treachery or folly of one (at a time when the king had few faithful and still fewer sagacious councillors about him) might defeat it. This danger was avoided, the chief arrangements being entrusted to De Bouillé on the frontier, and in Paris to the Count de Fersen, a nobleman of Swedish birth in the French army, who chose their subordinate agents with accurate judgment, and of whom the latter undertook in person the most difficult and dangerous part of the enterprise.

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* It is impossible to be certain of the truth of many of the circumstances which are generally related in connexion with this transaction. Croker puts the difficulty in a striking light. "Besides its political importance, the journey to Varennes has an interest of another kind as affording an extraordinary instance of the difficulty of ascertaining historical truth. There have been published at least twelve narratives by eye-witnesses of, and partakers in those transactions . . . . And all these narratives contradict each other, some on trivial and some on more essential points, but always in a wonderful and inexplicable manner."—"Essays on French Rev.," p. 112. It may be added that Croker furnishes strong reasons for disbelieving some circumstances on which the different writers are nearly if not quite unanimous. The story, for instance, that M. d'Agoult could not be taken in the royal carriage because Madame de Tourzel insisted on her right as a matter of etiquette, she being the governess of the royal children. But he points out justly that her presence was indispensable, for the passport under which the party was to travel was for her (as the Baronne de Korff) and her attendants. By his critical dissection of the conflicting narratives, I have been in more than one instance guided both in the statements contained in the text, and in the omission of some circumstances ordinarily received as accurate.

A greater danger arose from the inexperience in travelling of the whole family, neither the king nor queen having ever been further from Paris than Versailles since their marriage. A third might have been anticipated in the overzeal of those entrusted with the arrangements, as exciting suspicions by the variety and greatness of the precautions taken for secrecy and safety. But in the result all the difficulties which beforehand might have seemed the most conducive to failure were eluded or overcome, and at almost the last moment, when the enterprise was on the point of being crowned with success, it was defeated by a trifling accident, which, even after it had occurred a very little good fortune or a very little resolution would have rendered unimportant.

After several discussions Montmédy, a small town on the frontier of Luxembourg, was fixed upon as the place which the king should endeavour to reach, and the road by Châlons-sur-Marne and Varennes as that by which he should travel. Relays of horses were provided, and the time at which the royal carriage would arrive at each was carefully measured by M. Goguelat, an engineer officer, high in the confidence of both the queen and De Bouillé, who previously made the same journey in his own carriage. A passport, signed by Montmorin as foreign minister, was provided for Madame de Tourzel, the governess of the royal children, who, assuming the name of Madame de Korff, a Russian baroness, professed to be returning to her own country with her family and ordinary equipage. The dauphin and his sister were described as her children, the queen as their governess, while Louis, under the name of Durand, passed as their servant. Three of the old disbanded bodyguard, MM. de Valory, De Malden, and De Moustier,

were added to the party disguised as couriers; and under pretence of escorting a large sum of money which he required for the payment of the army, De Bouillé undertook to post a detachment of troops at each town between Chalons and Montmédy through which the travellers were to pass. Towards the end of May De Bouillé received a letter from the king himself, informing him that the 19th of June, at midnight, was the time on which he had fixed for setting out, which was subsequently postponed to the 20th. De Bouillé would have preferred a much earlier day, since it was evident that the longer the attempt was delayed the greater would be the risk of discovery. Indeed few things are stranger than that the design should not have been discovered long before it was put in execution, and that the royal family should have been able, going in a body as they did, to escape from the Tuilleries at all; for the preparations were extensive and conspicuous. Clermont Tonnerre, who, though not privy to this particular expedition, had coincided with Mirabeau as to the necessity of Louis emancipating himself from the control of the Assembly and the Parisian mob, had recommended that he should escape by himself on horseback, while the queen and her children in their carriage should take at first an apparently different direction. But the queen, partly because she distrusted her husband's energy and resolution if he were left by himself, and partly because at such a time of danger she thought it her duty at every moment to be by his side to share it, would not hear of that plan, and it was decided that they should all flee together. A carriage of unusual size, large enough to contain them all inside, had to be built. The queen again, who saw the necessity of not removing her articles of personal

luxury, required to have a large travelling dressing-case made, which she proposed to send forward into Flanders, under pretence of making a present to the Archduchess Christine; and though her faithful attendant, Madame de Campan, argued earnestly against the design, as one that would be sure to attract notice and excite suspicions that she herself intended to follow it, she persisted in the order,* so little could even she comprehend how easily suspicions might be raised, and how slight a circumstance might mar the best laid design. And Madame de Campan's fears were well founded, for one of the queen's waiting-women divined what was in agitation; and, having an intrigue with Gouvion, an aide-de-camp of Lafayette, to whom the task of keeping a ceaseless watch on the movements of every one within the palace was entrusted, she warned him, and he conveyed the warning to his chief, that the queen at least was preparing to flee. Lafayette redoubled his vigilance, driving down to the palace himself night after night; and even on the very evening when the fugitives were already disguised, actually in motion, and some outside the palace, he visited the royal apartments, only returning on being informed that they had already gone to their bedrooms.

However, in all the first steps the plan succeeded perfectly. De Fersen, who in the preceding year had had such a carriage as was wanted built for some friends in the South of Europe, had no difficulty in procuring another like it of the same maker; and as it was too remarkable in appearance to be brought to the Tuilleries, he contrived its delivery at the house of a trustworthy friend in the Rue de Clichy (an

* Madame de Campan's Memoirs, c. 18.

English writer may mention with some pride that he was an Englishman, a Mr. Craufurd); and for the conveyance of the fugitives out of the palace he procured an ordinary job carriage, which at the appointed hour he himself drove into the Princes' court. The queen, who trusted nothing to others that she could do herself, conducted Madame de Tourzel and the children down to the court, and saw them safely arranged. But even her nerves nearly gave way when Lafayette's carriage, brilliantly lighted, with several servants on the outside, drove close by her while she was thus engaged, to make sure of her presence in her apartments. In an agony of fright she sheltered herself behind some pillars; and in a few minutes the marquis drove back, and she rejoined Louis. She had inspired even the children with her own courage. Presently one of the three body-guards brought down the Princess Elizabeth; and, as she got into the carriage, she trod upon the dauphin, who, dressed in girl's clothes, was lying at the bottom; but the poor boy uttered neither word nor cry. The king had already quitted his room, when he returned; and the motive of his doing so shows how, in spite of the want of moral and political resolution which brought such miseries on himself and his country, he could preserve in the most critical moments his presence of mind, and kind consideration for others. M. Valory, the body-guard who was escorting him, was dismayed when he saw him turn back, and ventured to remind him how precious was every instant. "I know that," replied Louis; "but they will murder my servant to-morrow for having aided my escape," and sitting down at his table he wrote a few lines, declaring that the man had only acted under his peremptory orders, and delivered them to him as a certificate to ensure

his safety. Last of all came the queen, who had stayed behind to see that nothing had been forgotten. Fersen drove them to the Porte St. Martin, whither the travelling carriage had already been brought, and having transferred them to it, and taken his leave of the sovereigns whom he trusted that he had saved, fled at once to Brussels, which, more fortunate than those for whom he had risked so much, he reached in safety.

For a hundred miles the travellers proceeded rapidly and without interruption. One of the supposed couriers was on the box, another rode by the side of the carriage, and the third went on in advance to see that the relays were in readiness. But when the travellers reached Châlons, where they were for the first time to be placed under the protection of detachments of troops, they began to experience difficulties. De Bouillé had been unwilling to employ his dragoons in that manner, urging that the notice which their arrival in the different towns must inevitably attract would do more harm than their presence as a protection could do good; but he had been overruled by the king himself, who apprehended the greatest danger from the chance of being overtaken after his flight had become known to Lafayette, and expected it therefore to increase with every hour of his journey. But De Bouillé's fears were found to be the best justified by the event. In more than one place there had, in the few hours that the soldiers had been there, been quarrels between them and the townspeople; in others, what was still worse, the townspeople had made friends with them and seduced them from their loyalty, so that the officers in command had withdrawn them altogether.* And the anxiety which their un-

* M. De Bouillé, c. xi., p. 247.

expected absence caused the king, led him more than once to show himself at the window. More than once he was recognised, but those who knew him were well-wishers, who kept their counsel. But Drouet, the postmaster at Ste. Menehould, had lately been in Paris and had become infected with the Jacobin doctrines. He also was struck by the king's face, and comparing it with the stamp on some assignats which he had in his pocket-book, became certain of his identity. He at once hastened to the municipal magistrates to report what he had seen; they gave him orders how to act, and the royal carriage had hardly left the town before he mounted his horse and rode on towards Clermont, hoping to be in time to stop the king at that town. Before he reached it he learnt that he had already passed it, and had taken the road to Varennes. The carriage had made such good speed that it had reached that place also before him. Had it quitted it too all would have been safe, for a strong division of troops were but a few miles beyond. But Varennes is a town on the Aire so small as to have no post-house; so that it was necessary to have the relay waiting in the street; and unhappily Goguelat, to whom the arrangement of the relays had been entrusted, had been with the first detachment of troops that had been withdrawn, and in the hurry of retiring had forgotten that the king was in ignorance at which end of the town to expect the horses. They had been placed at the further end, that the carriage might pass through the town without delay and without notice. But M. Valory, who was riding in front, had not found them when it reached the village; it halted at the entrance; and while it was standing still Drouet passed, and ordered the postilions not to proceed. He himself hastening through the village collected a few of the townspeople who shared his politi-

cal views, and with their aid he got two or three carts and upset them on the bridge; and, having thus rendered the road impassable he woke up the municipal authorities, for it was nearly midnight, and then returning to the carriage compelled the royal family to dismount, and follow them to the house of the mayor, a small grocer named Sausse. The magistrates sounded the tocsin; the national guards beat to arms; Louis was a prisoner. How he was allowed to remain so is, after all the explanations that have been given, incomprehensible. Two officers with sixty hussars, all well affected to him, were actually in a side-street of the town waiting for his arrival, of which they were not aware. Six of the troopers actually passed the travellers in the street as they were proceeding from the carriage to the mayor's house: but no one, not even the queen, appealed to them for succour, or they and their comrades could have delivered them without an effort, for Drouet's entire party amounted to no more than eight unarmed men. And when an hour afterwards the officers learnt that the king was in the town and had been arrested against his will, instead of at once attacking those who detained him, or even applying to him for orders, they were seized with a panic of bewilderment, and galloped back to De Bouillé to bear to him the intelligence of his master's situation. In less than an hour afterwards the Duke de Choiseul, with forty soldiers, and the Count de Dumas with a dozen more also arrived; and presently sixty more under M. Deslons. They did make their way to Louis and asked his orders; but could obtain no reply but that he was a prisoner and had no orders to give. And not one of them had the sense and resolution to perceive that the mere fact of his being a prisoner was in tself an order to deliver him. They did nothing.

One word of command from Louis to clear the way for him at their swords' point would as yet have been cheerfully obeyed, and would have sufficed to save him; but he had still the same invincible repugnance to sanction the spilling of one drop of blood in his cause. He feared, too, lest in the conflict some chance shot or sword-stroke might injure those who were dearer to him than himself. He preferred trusting to entreaties. With a dignity derived from his entire personal fearlessness he announced his name and rank; his reasons for quitting Paris, and the object of his journey, which was but to proceed to Montmédy, since he had no thought of leaving the kingdom. And while he demanded to be permitted at once to continue on his way, he expressed his willingness that the national guard should accompany him. The queen at the same time holding the dauphin in her arms, threw herself on her knees to Sausse's wife, dwelling on the danger in which all their lives would be if they returned to Paris, and imploring her to use her influence with her husband to allow them to proceed. Neither Sausse nor his wife were in their hearts ill-disposed towards the king; but had they been ever so desirous to aid him they had not the courage to do so. The woman feared for her husband, the man feared for himself, and, reminding the king of the enactment which forbade him to go more than twenty leagues from Paris, added that his head would be in danger from the wrath of the Assembly if he permitted the king to quit the town. He would soon have found it difficult, had he been ever so inclined, to let them go; for the tocsin had brought in national guards from the surrounding districts, and Choiseul's troopers began to show a disinclination to act against them. And thus for a time

matters stood, a crowd of villagers, peasants, national guards, and dragoons thronging the doors; the king passive and occasionally arguing with his captors, the queen weeping; for the fatigue and the disappointment at being thus baffled at the last moment, after she had felt assured that all danger was over, had for the moment broken down even her nerves. At first she had, as usual, endeavoured to prevail on Louis to act with resolution; but when, as usual, she failed, she gave way to despair, and sat silent with touching, hopeless sorrow gazing on her children who had fallen asleep.

At seven o'clock a single horseman, an aide-de-camp of Lafayette, made his way through the crowd. On the morning of the 21st the excitement had been great at Paris when it became known that the king had fled. The mob rose in furious tumult. They forced their way into the palace, plundering it of or destroying much of its furniture. A fruit-woman took possession of the queen's bed as a stall to range her cherries on, saying to-day it was the turn of the nation; and a picture of the king was torn down from the walls, and after being stuck up outside the gate all day in derision, was offered for sale to the highest bidder.* They nearly massacred Lafayette on the suspicion that such an attempt could not have succeeded without his privity and connivance. In the Assembly was equal vehemence but less disorder. M. Beauharnais, the president, announced to the deputies that Bailly as mayor had reported to him that the enemies of the nation had carried off the king. Both mayor and president had reason afterwards to wish that the intelligence had been true to its full

* Lamartine, ii. 15.

extent, when, after he had been murdered they also perished on the same scaffold, as indeed did most of those who at any time were leaders in the attacks upon their sovereign; but no apprehensions of such a fate disturbed any of them now. Their sole anxiety was to prevent his escaping from their power. An order was at once drawn up in form that Louis should be seized wherever he might be found and brought back to Paris. It was sealed by Duport as minister of justice, and despatched by an aide-de-camp, whom Lafayette, judging that it must be to the army of De Bouillé that the king had fled, ordered to take the Varennes road. He reached Varennes; delivered the order to Sausse; Louis with scarcely any attempt at further resistance obeyed the order; and before eight in the morning he, his queen, his children, and his sister, with their three faithful body-guards, now in undisguised captivity, were travelling back to Paris.

Even at the last moment had Louis refused to obey an order which no one could possibly pretend that the Assembly had authority to issue; had he so far contested it as to cause but two hours' delay, he would have been saved. De Bouillé's officers who had quitted Varennes in search of him had found him close to Stenay; and he at once hastened to get the regiment he had with him under arms. There was more delay than he had expected; for though he had ordered the colonel to keep his men in readiness to move, that officer had allowed them to go to bed; but they were soon roused, soon in the saddle, and De Bouillé at their head galloped with all speed to his master's rescue. It was scarcely more than nine o'clock when he met Deslons just outside Varennes, and learnt from him that the king had already quitted

the town in the opposite direction. Deslons, a most gallant and loyal officer, had tried to get round by a byepath to fall on the carriage on its way back to Ste. Menehould, but had been stopped by a deep canal which he had no means of crossing. He had had no other alternative but to return to seek his commander; and De Bouillé, judging from his report that no further attempt to effect the king's release could afford the slightest probability of success, returned to Stenay, and fled across the frontier to save himself from the fate which he could not doubt that the Assembly was preparing for him.

Who can describe the anguish felt by the royal prisoners on their way back to Paris, which they could well foresee they should never leave again! The national guard of Varennes, and of the other towns through which they passed, insisted on their right to accompany them; and, as they were only infantry, the speed of the carriage was limited to their walking pace. So slowly did the procession advance that it was not till the evening of the fourth day that it reached Paris, and during the whole time many an insult and many a threat was launched at the king and queen. To such a pitch of fury did their self-appointed guards work themselves up that at Ste. Menehould they murdered the Count de Dampierre, a nobleman of the neighbourhood, for daring to approach them with expressions of respect and sympathy; and, according to the fashion of the time, carried his head for a long distance just in front of the carriage; and, before they had gone much further, the prisoners were denied even the poor privilege of grieving by themselves. When they had passed through Châlons the day before Marie Antoinette had not been able to suppress an exulting exclamation that they were safe.

Now they were met almost at the same place by Pétion, Barnave, and Lautour Maubourg, three deputies whom, as soon as the news from Varennes reached Paris, the Assembly had appointed to take charge of them, and for whom they were compelled to make room in the carriage. In one thing the Assembly was disappointed. The deputies did not all add to the affliction of their captives. Pétion, a man of low birth, behaved indeed with studied brutality, eating fruit and throwing the stones and peel out of the carriage window across the faces of the king and queen, and making the princess hold his glass while he filled it. His vanity was even more disgusting than his rudeness. In that long journey of misery the princess, who was very beautiful, occasionally addressed herself to him; and, though the topics of her conversation were the past events and future prospects of France, he conceived that she had fallen in love with him, and was making advances to him with the hope of gaining his affections; and he occupied himself in calculating his chances of happiness if he should condescend to respond to her wishes and ally himself with the royal family.* But his views on that subject did not make him more courteous to his intended brother-in-law; and every now and then he would force the king into political discussions, that he might tell him that he was a republican and hoped soon to see the French ripe for a republic. On the other hand, Barnave, who, as we have seen,

* Quinet, vol. i., p. 275, and "Histoire de la Terreur," par M. Mortimer Ternaux, i. 353, quoting Pétion's own letters. In a letter to Madame Raigecourt of Nov. 16, 1791, the princess herself alludes to these conversations:—"Nous allons avoir pour maire M. Pétion. Je t'avoue que j'ai été si ridiculement à mon aise avec lui dans le voyage que je serais d'un embarras extrême de ne pas avoir le même ton, et de ne pouvoir lui dire ce que je pense."—Feuillet de Conches, vol. iv., No. 614.

would long since have gone over to the side of the king, had not the queen rejected his offers, now remembered his former prepossessions, forgot the slight which he had received, and showed a decorous sympathy with fallen greatness, which, as they proceeded, the gentleness of the king and the dignified fortitude of the queen gradually converted into a renewed desire to render them active service. He repented of the part he had hitherto taken, and from the time that he was thus brought into personal contact with them he became a steady partisan of constitutional monarchy.

It was the afternoon of the 25th when they came in sight of Paris. So great had been the mental sufferings of the queen that in those four days her hair had turned white. And fresh and studied humiliations were yet in store for her. The carriage was conducted some miles round, that it might be led in triumph down the Champs Elysées, where a vast mob was waiting to feast their eyes on the spectacle, whose sullenness was secured by a notice that had been issued, prohibiting any one from taking off his hat to the king or uttering a cheer. The national guards were forbidden to present arms to him; and they seemed to have interpreted their orders as a prohibition also to use them in his defence; for, as the carriage approached the garden of the Tuileries, which it was to enter, a gang of desperate ruffians, some of whom were recognised as the most ferocious of the former attackers of Versailles, forced their way through their ranks, pressed up against the carriage, and even mounted on the steps. Barnave and his two colleagues, fearing that they intended to break down the doors, placed themselves against them; but they were content with looking in at the windows and uttering savage threats. The queen became

alarmed, not for herself but for her children. They had so closed up every avenue of air that those within were nearly stifled, and the children of course suffered most. She let down a window and appealed to those who were crowding it. "For the love of God," said she, "retire, my children are choking." "We will soon choke you," was the only reply they vouchsafed her; but presently, when they had glutted their curiosity, and when the carriage as it entered the garden was met by Lafayette with an armed escort, they got down, still following it to the gate of the palace. They had immediate victims in their eye; not the king and queen; for they believed them to be reserved for public execution; but the three body-guards, who had been brought back bound on the box of the carriage. And these gallant men would certainly have been massacred had not the queen remembered them, and, while dismounting, entreated Barnave and Lafayette to protect them. Though during the last three days many things had their names altered, the Tuilleries* had been spared. It was still in name a royal palace; but those who now entered it knew it for their prison. The sun was setting, the emblem of the setting of their royalty, as they ascended the stairs, to find such rest as they might, and to ponder in privacy for this one night over their fatal disappointment, and their still more fatal future.

The king on quitting Paris had left behind him a manifesto addressed to the Assembly, in which he explained with clearness and evident sincerity the

* "The Palais Royal had been named Palais National. All signs with the portraits of the king or queen, all emblems of royalty, were torn down. A man was obliged to erase his name from above his shop because he was called Louis."—Moore, ii. 356.

causes which had determined him to leave the city, and the objects which he had proposed to himself. He complained that the whole course of events since the commencement of the Revolution, and the whole tendency of the policy of the Assembly, had been to reduce him to the condition of a puppet, with nothing of royalty but the name; that not only did the constitution, so far as the Assembly had yet framed it, deny him many of the powers indispensable to the discharge of his duties, but that many even of those rights which it did reserve to him he was not permitted to exercise. That the Assembly itself, while thus usurping his prerogatives, was not in reality the master of the State, but was in a state of subjection to the different clubs. He spoke of the insults which had been offered to his aunts and to himself at the preceding Easter. He had thought it necessary for himself, and also for the Assembly, to demonstrate to the world his freedom of action by going to Montmédy, where he would equally as in Paris be able to conduct the government of the country. He should never be out of the kingdom, and should be most anxious to return to his capital the moment that the citizens had learnt to distinguish their true from their false friends, and that the Assembly showed itself willing to co-operate with him in framing a constitution under which both religion and law would be secured the respect that was indispensable to the welfare of all, and the liberty of the whole nation established on a solid and immoveable foundation.

Such, undoubtedly, were his real motive and objects. It is equally certain that the step he took would not have accomplished his ends; but would have led to other results which he not only neither desired nor contemplated, but which were above all

others those which he most wished to avoid. In the history of the English Stuarts, as he had read it, two facts stood out in especial prominence: that Charles the First had lost his life because he had made war upon his people; that James the Second had lost his crown because he had abandoned his kingdom. These two mistakes, therefore, he was resolved carefully to avoid. But it is scarcely possible to doubt that if he had reached De Bouillé's army he would have been forced into one or both of them. The Assembly would certainly not have waited to hear of his having crossed the frontier, but would, it may confidently be asserted, have at once pronounced his deposition. And nothing but civil war in which he was victorious could have annulled that sentence. That he would have been successful in such a contest is again highly improbable. It is even doubtful whether he would have had the means of sustaining it for a single day; whether the very regiments on which De Bouillé most relied for obedience to himself and for attachment to the king could have been induced to make war upon the Assembly for his sake. And at best their numbers must have been scanty, and very inadequate to the encounter of their comrades of the regular army who had declared for the revolution; of the national guard; and, besides these forces, of the whole population, townspeople and peasantry alike, who were actuated, as the incidents of his flight too clearly convinced him, by one unanimous feeling to support the Assembly. Had his flight succeeded, it would indeed have been a fortunate event in other points of view; fortunate for all parties. It would have saved him and those dear to him from months of protracted anguish, and from cruel deaths. It would have saved the greater part of the Assembly itself from similar calamities. It would

have saved the whole nation from the ignominy of submission to the yoke of a gang of miscreants, not qualified for authority by statesmanship or capacity for ruling, and disqualified by every vice and every crime that ever stained the history of mankind; and from the unutterable miseries in which those rulers involved the whole country; from the September massacres of Paris, from the drownings of the Loire, the cannonade of Lyons, from the Reign of Terror in every department.

And, in proportion as Louis misjudged the consequences of his escape, could he have accomplished it, did the Assembly misjudge the course which was expedient for itself. Lafayette's despatch of his aide-de-camp in pursuit the moment that he heard of his flight was but the hasty act of a weak man, who feared to be held accountable for it, and whose sole thought was to save or regain his popularity by a show of zeal in the cause of the nation. But it was not till after deliberation and discussion that the Assembly decided on bringing the king back by force, and sent commissioners from its own body to carry out their decision. Yet unless its leaders supposed De Bouillé strong enough to crush their party by force of arms, and by one immediate blow, the king's flight was in reality a matter of congratulation to them. It had thrown the whole game into their hands. It was even favorable to the views of each separate party. If the constitutionalists were strong enough, in the discussions on those articles of the constitution which still remained unsettled, to maintain their own views, they would find increased freedom of action in a state of affairs which, while it in no degree prevented their bringing back Louis himself, greatly facilitated their choice of any other sovereign. To the Extreme Left, the repub-

licans, it was still more favorable; it could not fail to strengthen their hands by the plausibility of the pretext which it afforded them of representing it either as an act of hostility to the constitution, or as a voluntary renunciation by Louis of his kingly office. By bringing him back, the constitutionalists were identifying the maintenance of his personal authority with the constitution which they were framing; the republicans were diminishing their chance of a republic by compelling the presence of one whose very existence was incompatible with such a form of government. Yet we have no knowledge that a single deputy saw the impolicy of interfering with the movements of Louis; certainly no one opposed the despatch of Barnave and his colleagues to bring him back; and though, even before he reached Paris on his return, furious divisions which had broken out in the Assembly plainly showed what embarrassments must arise from his expected arrival, no one seems to have repented the decision.

During the two first days, the 21st and 22nd, no one doubted that the king had accomplished his escape. His manifesto was read, and a committee was appointed to draw up a reply to it, which however was not so much a reply, since it made no allusion to more than one or two of the complaints expressed in the manifesto,* as a declaration that his flight had of itself invested the representatives of the nation with the powers necessary for the safety of the State, and an assurance that the activity of the Government would therefore not be impeded by the absence of one who was only the chief of the public functionaries. And the Assembly then passed on to the order of the

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Both the manifesto and the reply are given at length by Lacretelle in the appendix to his eighth volume.

day, and proceeded with the task with which it had been previously occupied, of completing the articles of the constitution. The only token that it gave of considering the state of affairs more than usually critical, was a declaration that it was, as it was called, in permanence; so that it adjourned neither by day nor by night, but continued in uninterrupted deliberation waiting for further intelligence. Here and there a deputy was heard expressing a hope that the king had really emigrated, or throwing out loose conversational hints of the propriety of declaring the throne vacant; the partisans of the Duke d'Orleans tried to suggest his claims to the succession, or to the regency, but found the contempt for him too universal; and more busy than any one was Robespierre with his whispered proposals of a republic, his denunciations of secret treachery, and the ill-omened cry which he now began to raise of Blood! Blood!

But presently the news of the king's seizure at Varennes suspended all discussion in the Assembly till his arrival. Those who were most hostile to him devoting themselves chiefly to exciting the populace against him, that, when the moment should come that he was actually in their power, they might have accomplices at hand to give support to, and, if occasion should offer, to compel compliance with whatever demands they might find an opportunity of making at the Cordeliers. Danton and Marat poured forth their tiger-like cries for blood, demanding the heads not only of the king and queen, and of those ministers, Montmorin and De Lessart, who were understood to be most in their confidence, but of all who wished to keep any terms with them; of Lafayette, Bailly, and all the constitutionalist party in the Assembly. The walls of the city were covered with placards

couched in similar language, and newspaper writers and pamphleteers were unwearied in the issue of the coarsest and most indecent libels. D'Orleans, undismayed by the failure of his agents to produce a movement in his favour, was equally busy with his money. The Count de Provence had fled at the same time with the king, but with better fortune had reached Brussels in safety. And since there was therefore no other prince of the blood royal in the kingdom, the duke still hoped, in spite of the scorn which every one felt and expressed for him, of which he was equally conscious and regardless, that an opportunity would surely arrive for his friends to advance his claims. He endeavoured to pave his way to the throne itself by a declaration that he would not accept the regency, and sought to keep up his influence with the lowest of the rabble, as well as to gratify his own hatred to his kinsman, by thrusting himself forward to gaze on and ridicule the fugitives when they were brought back.

The next morning, though it was Sunday, the Assembly met to deliberate on their fate. The Jacobin party, looking on the seizure and return of the king as a victory gained by themselves, and led by Robespierre, were loud in their demands that he should be instantly brought to trial; not concealing their expectation that it must be followed by his condemnation. Robespierre openly denouncing the idea of the personal inviolability of the sovereign for personal actions, (thus implying a distinction between them and those which were done in his official capacity as king), as one which "created a God upon earth;" and, foreshowing the doctrine which was so fatally acted on the next year, he declared that "if the

[1] Moore, iii. 368.

Assembly declined to make laws to punish all offences without exception, the people had a right to take the law into their own hands, and to punish them themselves." While Pétion and Buzot, though equally insisting on the trial of Louis, proposed that deposition should be his punishment, and added a demand for a national convention which should proclaim a republic. They now, however, had to encounter Barnave as an adversary. Since the death of Mirabeau he was indisputably the most brilliant orator in the Assembly, and in some respects he had the most statesmanlike views; his chief defect being a want of persistent energy. He saw clearly that if the king were now abandoned, those beneath whose assaults he would fall must obtain the mastery of the State. Probably when he originally was so earnest in stripping the crown of its ancient privileges, in elevating the pretensions of the commons, and in reducing all classes to one level, he had no very definite idea of the final result of the alterations he was advocating. But now he saw clearly that the supreme power, if taken from the Tuilleries, could only be transferred to the Jacobins and Cordeliers; and he was not inclined, for the nation or for himself, to exchange the sway of the pious and gentle Louis for the bloodthirsty tyranny of Marat and Robespierre. The Lameths, and Adrien Duport, who as one of the councillors of parliament and deputies of the commons, had originally been among the most vehement advocates of their pretensions, but had gradually become alarmed at their excesses, shared his feelings; and as their mouthpiece, he now replied to and refuted the declamation of Robespierre with ingenious eloquence and statesmanlike argument. He reminded the Assembly how completely they had already extinguished all

those privileges of class which were pernicious and deservedly odious; how they had consummated, with great glory to themselves, a revolution without a parallel in the annals of the world; and declared that now to proclaim a republic, which must equally be the result of Robespierre's or of Pétion's motion, was to plunge into a new revolution, which could only hurry the nation from storm to storm, from abyss to abyss. They had created liberty: Robespierre wished to make them substitute for it a violent and bloody despotism. And he warned them that those (the Jacobins and Cordeliers) who wished to begin by impeaching the king, would soon impeach the Assembly also; and annul all those enactments which interfered with their own views, as acts and badges of slavery. Property would be confiscated; and while the constitution was nominally handed over to metaphysicians and geometricians, to be regulated by abstract theories, in reality all the laws would be reduced to one general rule of brigandage. The motive of those against whom he was contending he declared to be a groundless personal hatred of the king; but he affirmed that his inviolability was the very first article of the constitution; and that it would be to establish a frightful principle arbitrarily to create a punishment for an offence which had not been foreseen, and then to apply that punishment to the only man whom the law declared wholly irresponsible and inviolable; not so much for his own sake, as because such a rule has been proved to be necessary to the peace of the State. To establish a retrospective law in civil affairs would strike every one as an intolerable act of tyranny, and now it was proposed to introduce such a law into the criminal jurisprudence, which was a thousand times worse.

The great danger now to be dreaded for the country was a prolongation of the revolutionary fever. They had kindled the admiration of the world by the sudden display of their national energy and power; it was now time to charm it by an exhibition of moderation, justice, and humanity, by the combination of their old with their new virtues."*

His whole speech was so in unison with the secret feelings of the majority of his hearers, that Robespierre and Pétion could muster but seven votes on their side. It even had the most unusual effect of working the instant conversion of twenty members who had come down intending to support the proposal to bring the king to trial. He was energetically seconded by the Duke de Liancourt, who enumerated numberless instances of the king's kindness to individuals, and of his willingness to sacrifice his acknowledged prerogatives to the welfare or wishes of the people. And the result of the whole debate was that resolutions were passed affirming in general terms that, if the king should withdraw his acceptance of the Constitution after he had sworn to it, or should employ an armed force against the nation, he should be taken by such acts to have abdicated his throne. And that any king who should so abdicate should thenceforth rank as an ordinary citizen, and as such be subject to the laws for all acts committed after his abdication.

But Barnave was not yet sure enough of his command on the assembly to venture to resist all enquiry into the departure of Louis from Paris, and was forced to content himself with contriving that it should be

* Lacretelle gives (vol. viii. pp. 294-302) copious extracts from the speeches of Robespierre and Barnave, of parts of which the sentences in the text are a translation.

conducted by a committee of three deputies, who should merely be instructed to ask the king and queen the reasons and objects which had led them to adopt such a step. The selection of the commissioners he was able to influence; and with such appreciation of character did he choose such as would be least offensive to the sovereigns, that one of them, Tronchet, was afterwards found among the advocates who defended the king before the convention. They at once repaired to the Tuilleries, where both the sovereigns replied with royal frankness to their questions. The answers of Louis were identical with the reasons alleged by him in his manifesto, which he justified by one or two additional arguments; that of the queen rested her participation in the journey on her duty as a wife, which enjoined her at all times to be the companion of her husband. She added the assertion that he had resolved on no account to quit the kingdom, and that, if he had proposed to do so, she should have used all her efforts to dissuade him from such a step. And she further exculpated Madame de Tourzel and the body-guards, affirming that they all had acted under positive orders, and had neither known their destination nor the king's intentions. The commissioners laid the answers on the table of the Assembly; and a committee to which they were referred reported that they furnished no grounds for taking proceedings against the king or the royal family, though it was not so merciful to De Bouillé, whose impeachment it recommended, knowing, however, that he was safe from its effects.

Not only the gentle Louis, but the high-spirited Marie Antoinette also was grateful to Barnave, and what she conceived to be consistent with her dignity should, it might have been thought, have been satis-

factory to her adherents. But so incurably blind were the deputies on the right, so utterly unable to comprehend the effect of the events and legislation of the last two years, that they resented all these measures of the Assembly as such unpardonable insults to the royal authority, that it was due to themselves to disown all participation in them by an avowal that henceforth they would take no part in any of its deliberations, unless they were such as to threaten or affect the personal safety of the king; and so persistently did they act up to this silly and mischievous policy, that they allowed several decrees to pass which the constitutionalists, if aided by their votes, would have been able to defeat, and which were, it can hardly be said indirectly, as fatal to the royal authority as if they had been express attacks upon it.

The Jacobin party, it may easily be supposed, were equally displeased; but they resolved to show their displeasure in another manner. They drew up a petition to the Assembly to dethrone the king, to which they affixed the signature of "the people;" and as they were aware that with such a signature it might perhaps not be received, and would certainly not be regarded, they resolved to endeavour to compel compliance with it, and openly invited the people to insurrection; fixing the 17th of July as the Sunday nearest to the anniversary of the Federation for its outbreak, and summoning a hundred thousand citizens to meet that day on the field of the Federation, as they styled the Champs de Mars, and there disown all future allegiance to a perjured king; "that day should be the last which should shine upon the traitors to the nation."

Lafayette was perhaps not displeased at the announcement of this intention to riot, which from its

openness seemed intended as a defiance of his national guards. His hand had lately been especially heavy on the king. When his aide-de-camp reached Varennes with the order that Louis should be compelled to return, the king's remark had been that it was the second time that M. Lafayette had made him prisoner; and though, when the royal party reached the Tuilleries the general had the effrontery to approach him with assurances of attachment to his cause and person, and asked him what orders he had to give, he for once failed to impose on his prisoner, and received no reply but that the king seemed rather to be under his orders than he under the king's. Marie Antoinette showed her scorn of his hypocrisy with less disguise; she gave him up her keys that he might search her boxes, and paid little heed to the indignation which he affected at being supposed capable of acting like a gaoler or a spy. In truth no gaoler ever took more rigorous precautions for the safe keeping of prisoners than those to which he now had recourse. Sentinels were placed along every passage of the palace, and, that they might have their prisoners constantly in sight, the door of every room was kept open day and night. Even the queen was not allowed to close her bedchamber; and a soldier was placed so as at all times to command a sight of the whole room; the only moment that the door was allowed to be closed being for a short period each morning while she was dressing.* Some of his measures had not even the pretence of preventing any repetition of the attempt to escape to justify them, and were such as are not adopted towards prisoners accused of the most heinous crimes before trial. He

* Madame de Campan, c. 18.

refused the king permission to see and consult with those deputies who were attached to his cause, though their very character of representatives of the people gave them a legal right to approach him. They were turned back from the gates by the sentinels, and when they addressed a formal remonstrance to the Assembly on the subject, Lafayette had sufficient influence with that body to cause it to be passed over without notice.

Having thus exhibited an active enmity, not only to the authority, but also to the person of both king and queen, he thought he could afford to show hostility, though not in an equal degree, to the Jacobin party. Its general plan was made ostentatiously public, and those details which were intended to be kept back were betrayed by one of their body to the municipal authorities. Talleyrand, who was at all times an enemy to violence and outrage, and who, as we have seen, had been greatly in Mirabeau's confidence, was one of the chief members of that body. He had not, like his deceased friend, the gift of swaying large bodies of men by his eloquence, nor the disposition to encounter personal risk for the sake of turning back the torrent, thinking it safer to follow than to attempt to guide popular opinion. But he was as deeply impressed as Mirabeau himself with the conviction of the danger, not only to the Government, but to individuals, of letting the dominion fall into the hands of a club whose members had not one qualification to enable them to exercise it, and whose sole temptation to desire it was the power which it would give some of them to glut their horrid and unexampled thirst for blood, and the majority to indulge their insatiable greed of gain. Bailly had been led by recent events to share the apprehensions, and

adopt the policy of Barnave. Charles de Lameth happened at the moment to be president of the Assembly, and with them Lafayette now concerted his measures for the suppression of the coming outbreak. Before the day appointed it became known to them that there was a division in the Jacobin councils. There was in the club a man named Brissot, of low birth, and character as base as that of any one who rose to eminence in these unhappy times, when infamy of some kind was the almost indispensable passport to power; but of considerable capacity, especially as a writer of pamphlets and libels; the composition of such for hire, in Paris and in London, had been for some time his chief means of livelihood; and since the outbreak of the revolution he had been busy in exciting the worst passions of the mob as editor of a paper which he called "Le Patriote Français," and which was little less ferocious in its exhortations than Marat's "Ami du Peuple;" and to that he now added another, "Le Républicain." He was a man of unwearied activity, and no little address, and he had contrived to connect himself with a man of high birth, of eminent scientific attainments, and of amiable character, though perverted by his passion for abstract theories, the Marquis de Condorcet.

These men, with Pétion, began to form a new party within the Jacobins, which at the end of the year was known in the legislative assembly as the Girondins, from the preponderance obtained in it by the deputies from the department of the Gironde. Agreeing with Robespierre and Danton as to the ultimate end of their efforts, they differed from them as to the means by which they desired to obtain that end. With the single exception of Condorcet, who afterwards as a member of the convention refused to vote for the death of Louis, they were as callous and indifferent

as any to deeds of bloodshed and cruelty, but they had all a certain lack of hardihood which led them to prefer to resort in the first instance to apparently milder expedients. They now, though as eager as Robespierre and Danton to overthrow the throne, thought means which at least in the outset should be peaceable, might secure their object; and proposed to use the hundred thousand men who had been summoned to meet at the Champ de Mars only to sign a petition to the Assembly to dethrone the king, intending also to obtain a similar document from the different departments. But their fiercer associates, who from the differences which that occasion engendered between them, became their enemies, and subsequently their destroyers, preferred beginning with intimidation and massacre, and had no doubt of being able, as soon as the masses which they had summoned to their side should be fully collected, to exasperate them sufficiently for their purpose, in spite of Brissot and his friends.

The first incident which helped them in their ferocious design has never been clearly explained. By seven on the appointed morning many thousands of their partisans, if vagabonds and ruffians whose sole means of livelihood lay in disorder and plunder, could be called the partisans of any particular employer, had assembled in the Champ de Mars, and thousands more were flocking in, when two men were discovered to be concealed under the steps of the altar, which had not been removed since the festival of the preceding year, and on which the petition which had been prepared was now to be signed. They were seized. Some declared they were spies of the police; others affirmed that they were assassins, intending to blow up the patriots as they approached the altar. They were

hurried off and hanged, and their heads struck off and put on poles, to be carried about in triumph. When the news of this deed of violence reached Lafayette, he at first contented himself with hastening to the spot with his staff. He was pelted with stones, and driven off, and as he retreated a national guard fired at him, but, though he was almost near enough to touch him with his pistol, missed him. The man was seized; but Lafayette ordered him to be released, giving occasion to many to believe that the act had been concerted with himself to enable him to make a show of magnanimity, and at the same time to stimulate those who were not in the secret to be the more zealous in his defence from this proof of the danger to which he was exposed.

He reported what had happened to the Assembly; where all the better disposed deputies insisted on the severest measures being at once taken to chastise the murder of these two men. The necessary resolutions were carried by great majorities. Bailly, as mayor, proclaimed martial law, hanging out the red flag from the Hôtel de Ville; and armed with this authority Lafayette, at the head of an overwhelming force of the national guard, hastened to the Champ de Mars. The mob were too numerous and too fierce to be easily intimidated. Shouting, "Down with the red flag! Down with the bayonets!" they assailed the soldiers with volleys of stones, which struck down many of their number. Lafayette, who had been resolute beforehand, hesitated. His popularity would be imperilled if a single man, however criminal or infamous, should perish by his order. He bade his troops fire over the heads of the crowd; a forbearance which such men imputed, as it was sure that they would impute it, to timidity. The stones flew more thickly, and

even some pistol-shots were fired at the soldiers. Many more fell, some dangerously injured, and then at last the general gave orders to fire. The national guard were in earnest; a hundred of the mob fell before that single discharge; their accomplices fled in consternation, and of the whole gang not one was so terrified as Robespierre himself. He not only fled from the field, but quitted his home. He feared the vengeance of the national guard: he was almost equally apprehensive of being denounced in and impeached by the Assembly as the prime mover of the riot. In the extremity of his terror he applied to a woman of strange character, who has already been mentioned, and whom it will be necessary to mention more than once hereafter, Madame Roland; a woman of brilliant talents, and who combined with a masculine strength of mind a disposition originally amiable and tender, had it not been perverted by the political frenzy of the time till she became, as we have seen, a fierce prompter of murder, and the ardent cultivator of the friendship of the worst monsters of the Revolution. For Robespierre she felt a particular admiration, and gladly induced her husband to give him an asylum in his house, while she prevailed on another friend, Buzot, to exert himself to prevent his prosecution.* They were well repaid for their zeal. Two years afterwards Robespierre was in effect the chief ruler of the country. He sent Madame Roland to the scaffold, her husband was driven to suicide, and Buzot, flying from a sentence of death, was torn to pieces by wolves.†

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* "History of the Girondists," viii. 17.

† It may be worth regarding that M. Quinet, who places Robespierre's flight a month earlier, at the time of the journey to Varennes, looks upon the terror which caused it as having had a permanent effect on his character:—"Je crois que c'est dans cette heure de panique que l'âme de

It was not till several days had elapsed, and till his protectors brought him assurance that those in authority seemed inclined to allow the affair to rest in oblivion, that he ventured again to show himself. His very fears showed how great would have been the ease with which he and his party might have been crushed for ever. The national guard were eager to proceed that very evening, and to close by force the Jacobin and Cordelier clubs; and had Lafayette been honest in the resolution which he always expressed to save the monarchy, he would certainly have taken advantage of their enthusiasm to destroy those hotbeds of treason. It was plain to every one that their continued existence was incompatible with the preservation of the kingly authority. They had openly committed themselves to its destruction; and, unless it were anticipated by their own extinction, that destruction was therefore inevitable. But they were saved by Lafayette's weakness. Half measures were, as usual, all that he could muster resolution for. He could not shake off his imbecile desire to retain some popularity even among such miscreants as the Jacobins. As he had expected Louis to believe in his protestations of attachment, because, when he might have dethroned him, he had the moderation only to make him a prisoner; so now he thought that if he abstained from crushing them wholly, the Jacobins, conscious of his power to do so, would rather be grateful for his moderation than angry at the extent to which he had disappointed their projects. He, too, lived to learn his mistake in trusting to their gratitude, though he escaped being their victim.

Robespierre perdit pour jamais son équilibre et que naquirent ces monstres de soupçons, d'ombrages, de craintes qui l'envahirent, et avec lui son parti."—La Révolution, i. 281.

It seemed as if Pétion and his party too had miscalculated their strength when they reckoned on the adoption of their petition by the departments. In many of them the open violence lately offered to the king by detaining him against his will in Paris in April, and dragging him back as a prisoner in June, had produced a strong reaction in his favour among all classes. And they now forwarded addresses to the Assembly expressing a warm approbation of the suppression of the riot, and in some instances so decided an attachment to the king that the Assembly began to doubt whether it would continue to be supported in any measures of a revolutionary tendency. Many of the members showed an evident desire to improve the king's position, but were perplexed and alarmed at the idea of openly retracing their steps. Barnave and his party endeavoured to give consistency to this change of sentiments by the establishment of a new club, which was founded at the house of Clermont Tonnerre, but derived its name of Feuillants from a convent of St. Bernard where it subsequently held its meetings. It was composed almost wholly of members of the Assembly of the constitutionalist party. Lafayette enrolled himself among its members: and its leaders followed the example of the Jacobins in trying to form corresponding societies in the provincial towns. But the battle was to be fought in the Assembly, and now more than ever might be seen how grievous was the error committed by Mounier, Lally, and their friends in withdrawing nearly two years before. It is not too much to say that if they had kept their seats in the Assembly to this time, they would even now, with the aid of Barnave and his friends, have been able to crush the party of anarchy; to give a different complexion to the subsequent

measures of the Assembly; to secure a fair trial for the constitution as the king was willing to accept it; and that they would have had the cordial support of the nation at large.

As one of the first articles of the constitution had fixed the duration of the Assembly at two years, it had not two months to live, and there was still much for it to do: for, since the constitution was not yet embodied in permanent form as one complete act, the putting it into such a shape necessarily afforded an opportunity for the revision of each separate clause; and therefore for modifying, or perhaps even cancelling, such as had either already been proved to work badly, or were manifestly inconsistent with the maintenance of any properly balanced power in the constitution. Such were those which established one chamber instead of two, and which denied the king an absolute veto; and almost equally objectionable, though but a temporary measure, as affecting only the existing Assembly, was a resolution which had lately been carried, declaring all the deputies ineligible for re-election as members of the new Assembly. Such a measure disqualified not only every one in the kingdom who had any experience in legislation whatever, but also all the supporters of the king, and placed the elections all over the kingdom in the hands of the Jacobins and their allies. That such must be its effect was of course its recommendation with Robespierre, who had proposed it, and who was not concerned at being himself excluded by it, because he foresaw that from the Jacobin Club he should be able to rule the new Assembly. But the court had not the shrewdness to perceive this. Though the queen had shown herself willing to accept the services of Barnave, she not the less cherished an indelible resentment against

and distrust of him and his party, as of men who had had the chief share in lowering the dignity and power of the crown; and regarding the whole Assembly with a not unnatural antipathy, she fancied that one composed of wholly new members could not possibly be more unfriendly to the king's person and government, and might probably be far better disposed towards them. She easily brought the king to adopt her views, and employed the whole of her influence to secure the adoption of the decree, sending agents to canvass those deputies who were known to be opposed to it.* With the Royalist members, the Extreme Right, her voice was law; and by the unnatural union of them and the Jacobins the resolution was carried.

The Royalist party carried their folly still further; faithful to their last absurd announcement that they would interfere only in such proceedings of the Assembly as menaced the personal safety of the king, they refused to co-operate with Barnave and his friends, and even with Malouet and Clermont Tonnerre, in procuring the repeal of those other articles of the constitution which related to the union of the deputies in one chamber, and to the veto. Malouet in private and in the Feuillant Club laboured with great energy and power of argument to prevail on all who thought with him to act with him; not to be ashamed to confess that they had been too precipitate in enacting those clauses; nor, while confessing their mistakes, to repair them. Resolution and union, he truly said, were all that was wanting to enable them still to give the constitution a character that should be at once dignified in itself, practicable, and safe for all

* Dumont, p. 336. He says he received his information from D'André, president the night the vote was passed, and who was himself canvassed by "un des principaux confidans du roi."

classes. His efforts were useless; the Royalists refused to co-operate with him, though they gave unmistakable proof of the extent to which they shared his apprehensions of the future consequences if those clauses were not rescinded, by fleeing from the country. Even Cazalès now joined the ranks of the emigrants, and before the dissolution of the Assembly his example was followed by at least half the deputies who shared his opinions. Such conduct was worse than cowardly; in effect, though not in intention, it was treasonable. Had those who now fled united with Malouet, Barnave, and the other old and new constitutionalists, they might have formed a party strong enough to undo the worst things that had been done. They would probably have awed Lafayette himself into steadiness, and under his lead the strength of the national guard would have been able to deter even the most discontented of the citizens from any open display of disaffection; but, when the support of the Royalists was refused, the constitutionalists by themselves were powerless. They lacked resolution for a conflict the issue of which was too doubtful. Their last attempt was to persuade the Assembly to pass a new vote adjourning their dissolution till the spring of the next year. But the majority of the deputies were far too weary of their two years' employment to desire to protract it; and finally the different articles were agreed to as they had originally been decreed, without any alterations but those of the most trifling and merely verbal character.

On the 3rd of September the President of the Assembly, a deputy named Thouret, at the head of a deputation of the members, waited on the king to present to him the Constitutional Act, and to request his sanction and acceptance of it. More than one

discussion had taken place on this subject; Robespierre in a furious speech, in which he had denounced all the king's advisers, and hinted without much ambiguity that bribes had been the inducement to Barnave and the Lameths to stand forth of late as his champions, had denied that the royal sanction was requisite. On the other hand, a deputy named De Croix had proposed that the king should be placed in a situation in which he should be really enabled to give or refuse his sanction according to his judgment; that he should be set at liberty and requested to select any city which might please him as a temporary residence, in which he could consider the different clauses without hurry and without constraint. The proposal had excited a violent tumult, and provoked a reply of unusual ferocity from Robespierre. The majority, however, felt the absurdity of putting forth the consent of the king as freely given while he was so completely a prisoner as not to be allowed to deliberate for a single moment in privacy, or even to close his door against the eyes of his sentinel; and a resolution was accordingly passed to grant him greater liberty, though the only change really made was to diminish the number of sentries within the palace for a day or two preceding the visit of the deputation.

Louis had made up his mind to accept the constitution. That he should do so without demur was the unanimous advice of all his ministers except Montmorin;* and even he did not so much counsel him altogether to refuse his sanction, as to qualify it by pointing out the objections which he entertained to some of its clauses. To do so would have been merely

* Collection of M. Feuillet de Conches, No. 360.

to rob his assent of its graciousness. The veteran Austrian statesman Kaunitz, whom Louis consulted, agreed with those who recommended an unqualified acceptance; and such a course coincided with his own feelings, as he described them in an elaborate letter in which he explained and justified his resolution to his brothers. It seemed to him the only means to avoid civil war, of which the result must be doubtful, but of which, there could be no doubt whatever, the events must be fraught with general misery to the nation; and he declared that though he himself had already suffered much he felt courage to suffer more rather than to make his people sharers in his unhappiness. He so far coincided with the desire of the Assembly to represent his judgment as freely formed, that he forbore to give an instant reply; but answered Thouret that he would take the affair into his consideration, that he would notify his decision with as little delay as possible, and that meanwhile he designed to remain in Paris: and on the 13th he sent a letter to the Assembly by the hands of Duport du Tertre, as minister of justice, stating that he approved the Act, and should visit the Assembly the next day to swear to the observance of it. The letter was received with acclamations, which if not sincere were loud and apparently unanimous. Lafayette moved that the Assembly should reply to it by passing an act of amnesty for all political offences, and a magnificent festival was appointed to be held in the Champ de Mars on the following Sunday in celebration of the joyful event. Yet the very same evening showed how little the hearts of the majority of the Assembly had been mollified or conciliated towards Louis by his compliance with their wishes, complete as it had been. They sent, indeed, a second deputation

to announce to him the amnesty which they had voted, and the members brought back an account of the great graciousness of their reception by both their majesties. But they had hardly returned to their seats before a fresh debate was raised as to the manner in which the king should be received on the morrow, and as to the demeanour to be observed by the Assembly before him; and it instantly appeared that those who had sway were determined to make his very condescension to their wishes an occasion for additional insult to his dignity. The moment that the president put the question what should be the attitude of the members while the king was taking the oath, a concourse of voices cried out that they should all keep their seats, and that the king should be standing and bareheaded; and when Malouet remonstrated, arguing that so to treat the chief of the State would be an insult not more to himself than to the nation, a deputy from Brittany shouted out an amendment that M. Malouet and those who thought with him might receive the king on their knees if they desired, but that those who did not should be seated.

And in accordance with this feeling every mark of respect was studiously withheld from the unhappy king, and every care was taken to show him that each deputy considered himself his equal. Two chairs exactly similar were provided for him and for the president; and when, after taking the oath and affixing his signature to the Act, the king resumed his seat, the president, who, having to deliver to him a short address, at first rose for that purpose, when he saw that the king kept his seat sat down by his side and finished his speech in that position. Louis felt the affront; he contained himself in the hall and while the members were conducting him back to the palace,

which they presently did amid the music of military bands and salutes of artillery; but when his escort had left him and he had reached his apartments his pride gave way. The queen with the dauphin had been present in a box hastily fitted up for her, and had followed him back; he felt for her more than for himself. Bursting into tears, he said, "It is all over; you have seen my humiliation. Why did I ever bring you into France for such degradation?" And the queen, while endeavouring to console him, turned to Madame de Campan, who has recorded the scene, and dismissed her from her attendance.* "Leave us," said she, "leave us to ourselves." She could not bear that even that faithful servant should remain to be a witness to the despair and prostration of her sovereign.

The very rejoicings were turned by the agents of the Jacobins into occasions for further insults. The illuminations were splendid, and Louis and Marie Antoinette yielded to the entreaties of the popular leaders to drive through the streets and Champs Elysées to see them; and the populace, who believed their freedom to be now secured, and were really grateful to the king for his concessions, cheered them heartily as they passed. But at every cry of *Vive le roi*, a stentorian voice close to the royal carriage shouted out, "Not so; *Vive la nation;*" and the queen, though it was plain that the ruffian was hired thus to outrage them, almost fainted with terror at his ferocity. A few days afterwards the insults were renewed even more pointedly. The royal family went in state to the opera, where the Jacobins had packed the pit beforehand with a gang of their own members, whose

* Madame de Campan, c. 19.

unpowdered hair made them conspicuous objects.* The opera was the "Evénemens Imprévus," by Grétry, and it happened that in one of the songs was the line, "Ah, comme j'aime ma maîtresse." The singer as she pronounced it bowed towards the royal box; and the pit rose in a fury: "No mistress for us; no master; liberty." The whole house was in an uproar; the king's attendants and partisans in other parts replied with loyal cheers, *Vive le roi, Vive la reine.* Louder still and more emphatically the pit bellowed, "No master, no queen," and the shouters proceeded to acts of violence towards all who forbore to join in their cry. Blows were struck, and it became necessary to send for a company of the guard to restore order.

On the last day of the month Louis paid a second visit to the Assembly to dissolve it, telling them in his parting speech that his doing so was another instance of his compliance with their opinions and wishes; since his own judgment would have led him to keep them together some short time longer, that they might see the working of the constitution which they had framed while they themselves retained the powers of legislation. The president, who on this occasion was Target,† congratulated both the king and the Assembly on having, the one by its enactment of the constitution, the other by his acceptance of it, consummated the Revolution and earned the blessings of posterity. And again the populace cheered the king as he returned to the Tuilleries; but, when the members themselves came forth, the objects of the applause of the crowd were

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* They were the first who introduced the fashion of leaving off powder. —Note by Madame de Campan.

† M. Feuillet de Conches, iv. 479, says Thouret.

not those who had espoused his cause, but those who had made themselves notorious by the bitterness of their enmity to him. Malouet and Barnave were hooted, and with difficulty protected from assault. Robespierre and Pétion were crowned with oaken chaplets, and the horses were taken from their carriage that their fellow-citizens might draw them in triumph to their homes. It was indeed an omen of future misery to the country if it was the genuine feeling of the people which had selected such men as the chosen objects of its favour; and it afforded a prospect scarcely more favorable if it was to be taken as an exhibition contrived by the Jacobins themselves, and as a training of the people to look with increased complacency on them, their plans, and their triumphs.

CHAPTER XL.

THE court had thought it impossible to find any body of men in the kingdom who should be more unfavorable to the cause of royalty than the Assembly which had just been dissolved. Even before the new one, known as the Legislative Assembly, was opened, they found their mistake. And, as Burke declared that when he read the list and description of the members of the States-General, he foresaw what would be done by them, a very inferior sagacity might have predicted the course which the Legislative Assembly would take from its composition. Two circumstances tended to affect its character: one as to the feelings which it was likely to exhibit towards the king; the other as to its capacity for the general work of legislation. For the creation of a loyal feeling to the constitution which had just been established, and for the steady maintenance of order and obedience to the laws, both were altogether unfavorable. Though universal suffrage had been established, the whole populace did not vote directly for the deputies. The first election was that of a section of the whole people; and to that section, as the delegates of the nation, the final choice of representatives to be sent to the Assembly was entrusted. And in the first place it happened unfortunately that this election of delegates took place during the weeks immediately following the king's attempt to escape to Montmédy, and while the revo-

lutionary party were stimulated by it to make unusual exertions to procure his deposition; and by their calumnious machinations were exciting the popular mind throughout the departments against the whole system of the existing Government. At such a moment few of the royalist party ventured either to offer themselves as candidates, or to attempt to influence the elections. Many, indeed, of those who from their property or character might previously have been expected to exert such influence, or whose presence as deputies would have been most valuable in the Assembly, were rather thinking of saving their lives by fleeing the country and joining the emigrants, so that the field was left entirely open to the nominees of the Jacobins; and it is rather a matter of surprise that any should have been returned who were favorable to the maintenance of the constitution, and to the king's authority, than that they should have been so few. The other circumstance was that decree of the Constituent Assembly which disqualified its members for re-election: the court, as has been mentioned, had favoured its enactment, mischievous as a law which excluded from the great national council every person of experience could not fail to be; but even those who most saw its inconsistency with every rule of common sense, could scarcely have anticipated the character which it would stamp on the Assembly, from the class to which it would practically limit the electors' choice. Not only were there hardly more than a dozen persons of noble birth among the members, and an equally small number of ecclesiastics, but property was as little represented as either the nobility or the church. Of the whole body, it was reckoned that not one in fifteen was possessed of above 2000 livres a year. The general youth of its members was as

singular as any other of its characteristics. Of elderly men it contained scarcely any; half had hardly attained middle age; many were little more than boys. When, on preparing to nominate the committee to arrange the details of the formal opening of the Assembly, the president summoned those who were under five-and-twenty to come forward; sixty at once presented themselves. From a body so composed what soberness of mind, what prudence in action, what respect for authority, what submission to established principles, what deference to experience, whether derived from the example of foreign nations or from the past history of their own country could be looked for? The division and composition of parties, as indicated by the seats which they assumed in the new Assembly, were in themselves sufficiently bad omens for the continued preservation of even such authority as was still permitted to the king. The left, as in the last Assembly, was appropriated by the Jacobins who now monopolized it. But there was no longer a royalist party to encounter them; Maury and Cazalès had fled from the kingdom and had left no successors. And the benches on the right, but partially filled, were occupied by the constitutionalists, whose support the court had till lately thought as dangerous as the avowed enmity of the Jacobins. They amounted to one hundred and sixty members; Count Mathieu Dumas, one of the few deputies who could boast of noble birth, being their leader; others, such as Ramond, Becquet, Beugnot, and Quatrenière, became prominent as speakers; and Dumas passes an affectionate eulogy on their talents and firmness. But there was no man in their ranks of genius or energy sufficient to guide their efforts, and enable them to make head against the majority. Their usefulness was

perhaps somewhat injured in public estimation by their occupation of the seats which in the last Assembly had belonged to the royalists and adherents of the ancient system.* It is certain that they were in no degree able to affect the march of events, or the character of the subsequent legislation. The centre, in which they had formerly sat, now fell to a body of men who avoided identifying themselves with either party, and all therefore, it was easy to guess, would finally side with that which they found the most powerful. Perhaps no greater proof can be given of the little weight that was expected to attach to the Assembly than is to be found in the fact that Danton, who was insatiably anxious for power, and who, being of a far more statesmanlike capacity than any of his colleagues among the Jacobins or Cordeliers, was a shrewd judge of how it was to be obtained, did not seek a seat in it; though he would have been sure of his election, and though, as few of the most prominent demagogues were eligible, he might have anticipated as decided a lead in it as had been enjoyed by Mirabeau in the last.

Yet, even Danton could not have anticipated the follies into which the Assembly plunged, headlong as it were, even before it was formally opened. It seemed as if the members thought that the main object for which they had been deputed to it was to offer gratuitous insults to the king. One deputy objected to allowing him to fix the time at which he would open the Assembly; another to the members

* This is the opinion of Dumas, "Memoirs," i. 214. He says the centre "professed moderate opinions, and were reputed wise." He adds that more than two-thirds of the members of the Assembly sincerely desired the preservation of the Constitutional Monarchy without any alteration of the fundamental law, and apparently attributes the defeat of the majority by the minority to the timidity of the centre, which prevented them from ever declaring their opinions openly.

themselves rising or uncovering themselves on his entrance. Two men, destined afterwards to an infamous notoriety, Couthon from Auvergne, and Vergniaud from the Gironde, one of the departments carved out of the old province of Gascony, made themselves particularly conspicuous; the latter subsequently becoming the leader of a section of the Jacobins which broke off from the main body, and which, as coming mostly from the same district as himself, as has been already mentioned, was known as that of the Girondins, and which exercised on the events of the next year a greater and more wicked and fatal influence than the Jacobins themselves. Other members of it were Gensonné and Guadet, both lawyers, and men of a certain degree of eloquence; one, Isnard who came from Provence, was the son of a perfumer. But in the faculty of commanding the attention of a public meeting all were far inferior to Vergniaud, who was an advocate by profession; and who had hitherto appeared a man of gentle and somewhat careless temper; but who, when his success as a speaker had opened to him the path of power, showed himself as unscrupulous and merciless as the Jacobins themselves. He aided to arrange the ferocious riots and outrages of the ensuing summer, the attacks on the royal family in June and August; voted for the death of the king; and finally, fell himself beneath the jealous hostility of Robespierre rather because he had less presence of mind and readiness, than because he had more virtue or humanity. He was young, poor, and corrupt. At a later period, as we have already had occasion to mention, he proposed to go over with his chief adherents to the side of the king, if Louis would pay them their due wages, which they estimated at about three thousand a year

for each individual. But now, on the first meeting of the Assembly, he was furious in his attacks on the king, wishing even to strip him of those titles of respect with which from time immemorial persons of all ranks had spoken of or to royalty. Couthon had already proposed to change his style from that of King of France to King of the French, and to exchange the gilded throne which had been prepared for him, for a plain undecorated chair like that provided for the president; but Vergniaud demanded the abolition of the title "majesty," and the address "sire." He knew no majesty, he said, but that of the law and the people; and sire, being an abbreviation of seigneur, recognised a lordship or sovereignty in the person addressed, inconsistent with the equality which really subsisted between all. They were abolished as a matter of course, and, before the Assembly adjourned, Couthon's motion was so far improved upon that it was resolved that, when the king came to open their sitting, he should occupy the second place, while the seat of honour should be reserved for the president.

It must be added that the deputies were not more respectful to one another; the last Assembly had borrowed from the English House of Commons the custom of calling each other honorable members; but to the Jacobin deputies of this new body such an expression seemed to savour of aristocracy; and one of their leaders, an incapable and hitherto utterly obscure man, a Capuchin named Chabot, moved a resolution prohibiting its use for the future.* And the ordinance was carried with as little opposition as those which

* Lamartine, vi. 2, 3. Dr. Moore, ii. 428: Letter of Princess Elizabeth.—"Louis XVI., Marie Antoinette," &c., vol. iv. No. 586.

affected the king. The Jacobins had gone too far. Louis, as we have seen, had been deeply hurt by the indignities to which he had been subjected by the last Assembly, and was resolved to avoid a repetition of the annoyance; and he therefore decided that he would not open the new Assembly in person, but would commission his ministers to appear in his stead. His resolution brought the deputies for a moment to their senses. It became known, too, that the tradesmen and artisans of Paris, who were deeply interested in the restoration of tranquillity, and in the preservation of some degree of splendour to the court, highly disapproved of their proceedings. They reopened the discussion; Herault de Sechelles, one of the few deputies who belonged to the higher classes, moved the repeal of the decree, urging with ingenious logic that it would be a mark of ingratitude to the National Assembly, to which the people were so largely indebted, to deprive the king of those titles and badges of respect which that body had deliberately conferred on him. His arguments were triumphant. The offensive resolutions were rescinded; and their repeal having been notified to Louis, he consented to open the sitting in person, as he had originally intended.

The language of his speech was evidently in a great degree his own, so entirely did it express the feelings which inspired him, so little were these feelings shared by any of his official advisers; for Louis was by nature so unalterably kind that he could not avoid trusting every one who had not deceived him; so prone to judge of others by himself that it was impossible for him not to hope, so long as the realization of his hopes seemed to depend on the humanity or integrity of his subjects. He exhorted them to work in harmony with one another and with himself, that thus an unalter-

able confidence might be established between the king and the legislative body; to regard nothing but the public interest; to enforce obedience to the laws, and respect for the rights of all classes; that no excuse might be left to any one to quit or to continue absent from the country. And the president, M. Pastoret, who belonged to the party of the constitutionalists, but who owed his appointment, not to the prevalence of his opinions, but to his age, though he was not fifty years old, replied in terms of respect and even attachment to the king's person. The constitution, he said, had given the king friends in those who were formerly styled only subjects. The Assembly and the nation felt the need of his love: as the constitution had rendered him the greatest monarch in the world, so his attachment to it would place him among the kings most beloved by their people. He promised the cordial co-operation of the Assembly with the king to purify legislation, to support public credit, and to crush anarchy; and assured him that the blessings of the whole French nation would reward him.

The same evening the whole royal family, including the little dauphin and his sister, went to the opera, and the entire mass of the spectators ratified the language of the president by their enthusiastic reception of them.† They burst into repeated cheers for both king and queen; and, as the happiness of children is

* "History of the Girondins," vi. 4.

† The Princess Elizabeth writes to Madame Raigecourt, Oct. 12, 1791: "Le roi est dans ce moment l'objet de l'adoration publique. Tu ne peux te faire une idée du tapage qu'il y eu Samedi à la Comédie Italienne." She adds, "mais il faut voir combien cet enthousiasme durera."—"Louis XVI., Marie Antoinette," &c., iv. No. 589. Compare the same volume, No. 629, where, date Dec. 3, Louis himself writes to the King of Prussia that "malgré l'acceptation que j'ai faite de la nouvelle constitution, les factieux montrent ouvertement le projet de détruire entièrement les restes de la monarchie."

always an attractive sight, they sympathized especially with the delight of the little heir to the throne, as the dauphin then seemed to be; who, being new to such a spectacle, only took his eyes off the stage to imitate the gestures of the actors to his mother, and draw her attention to them.

Louis yielded, as he was always eager to yield, to the illusion; for a moment he believed that he had recovered, or at least was recovering, his popularity. He even flattered himself that time and reflection would show the Assembly how impracticable were those articles of the constitution to which he felt the greatest repugnance, and would lead it of its own accord to modify them. But he soon found that the enthusiasm of the people was not lasting; that of the Assembly those who sympathized with the language of Pastoret were in the minority; and long before the end of the year he learnt that his acceptance of the constitution had not disarmed nor conciliated the factious enemies of his authority, who were as unwearied as ever in their exertions to destroy every vestige of the monarchy.

One sentence of his speech had conveyed an implied censure of the emigrants; and their conduct was not the most inconsiderable of his misfortunes. It could by no possibility have been less respectable, less consistent with common sense, or with patriotism, or, above all, with the interests of the king, in whose cause they professed to be acting. Their leaders did not scruple to express openly their distrust of the court itself, their disapproval of the king's conduct, their suspicions of the queen; while Calonne, who had gone

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* See his letter to his brother, date Oct. 16.—Feuillet de Conches, iv. No. 593.

to Coblentz, where most of them had established themselves to direct their political schemes, was jealous of M. de Breteuil, and did his best to disparage him to the German princes with whom he was in communication, and to traverse his designs, though he knew that the baron was the authorized agent of the king himself.* The quarrels between the leaders themselves were still more disreputable. The king's brothers established rival courts, with a mistress at the head of each; Madame de Balbi, his wife's lady-in-waiting, governing the Count de Provence, Madame de Polastron ruling the Count d'Artois; and each lady regarding the other with bitter jealousy, and agitating the whole society with their rivalries and wranglings; while the whole body, which was now very numerous, breathed nothing but war against their country. Wishing to procure their own restoration at the sword's point, they were unwearied in solicitations to every foreign potentate: to the Emperor, to the Empress of Russia, to the Kings of Prussia and Sweden, and even to some of the petty German princes, for aid in such an enterprise; and were not very careful, or perhaps not very solicitous, to keep secret their expectations of procuring such assistance. Such conduct, though it could hardly be said to alarm the Assembly, was sufficient to keep it in a constant state of irritation, which naturally vented itself on the king. Yet Louis had done his best to terminate it, but found himself utterly powerless to influence those who professed to be his most devoted subjects, and even his own brothers. Almost immediately after he had opened the Assembly he wrote to beg them to return. They refused, telling him, with a plainness which

* "Louis XVI., Marie Antoinette," &c., No. 594. Ib, 299.

was almost insulting, that he was writing under coercion, not expressing his real sentiments.* He wrote again in more peremptory phrase, saying that if his entreaties were disregarded, he laid his commands on them. They repeated their refusal, and addressed long explanations of it to the different sovereigns whose aid they had been soliciting. It was hardly possible that such conduct steadily pursued by the king's own brothers should not excite distrust of himself in the Assembly, and suspicions that his displeasure at their contumacy was but feigned, and that his language would be like theirs if he were equally free; even the constitutionalist party could not avoid sharing these apprehensions, so clear was it that civil war must be the result of the emigrants' machinations if they were not suppressed.

And while the Assembly was agitated by these causes of disquietude and anxiety, and their apprehension of impending attacks, the nation was suddenly startled by two actual outbreaks, one at home and one in its most valuable transmarine possession, which called for instant action to terminate and chastise them; while the failure of the Assembly to discharge its duty in either instance inevitably acted as an encouragement to the agents of outrage throughout the kingdom. At the beginning of the preceding year the authorities in Avignon having caught the contagion of revolutionary principles, had shown a desire to throw off the allegiance of the city to the Pope and to unite it to France.

* See his letters and the replies of the princes, &c., in M. Feuillet de Conches' collection, Nos. 593, 598, 608, 609, 617, 618, &c.; and the sentiments of Marie Antoinette on their behaviour in her letter to the Emperor Leopold, No. 603, date November 2, 1791. "La violence ferait périr par la violence. . . . voilà ce qui m'a toujours fait dire qu'il fallait menager surtout cette classe si nombreuse de gens jusqu'ici timides, mais amis."

At first the Constituent Assembly was unwilling to receive it: Louis himself was still more reluctant to sanction a step which bore such an appearance of disloyalty to the Holy Father; but as the scruples of the Assembly were probably feigned rather than real, they were soon overruled, and Duport urged so strongly on the king the impolicy of setting himself openly to prevent the attainment of what in many respects was a valuable acquisition, that he at last agreed to sanction it with his royal assent, and on the same day on which he formally accepted the constitution he also ratified the decree incorporating Avignon with his dominions. It was the signal for the most terrible atrocities which had yet taken place. The population was far from unanimous in the transfer of their allegiance. As was natural in a papal city, the priests were unusually numerous, and had a long-standing and powerful influence over a portion of the lower orders, not common in other parts of catholic France. As usual, the Pope was not without miracles to attest the displeasure of heaven against those who had despoiled him. A statue of the Virgin had blushed and wept at the profanation of her church by sacrilegious invaders. Her votaries resolved to resist the decree by force; and Lescuyer, the clerk of the municipal magistrates, falling into their hands, was murdered in the most inhuman manner, a woman actually kneeling on his prostrate body and scooping out his eyes with her scissors. The anti-papal portion of the populace was not to be outdone in barbarity. Jourdan, the leader of the band of Coupetêtes at Versailles, was a native of the adjacent district, and was at this moment in the city. Collecting a gang of ruffians like himself, he fell upon the priests and their party, breaking open their houses, plundering and slaughtering

all who fell in his way. Sixty persons had taken refuge in the palace and barricaded the doors. Jourdan forced the barriers. Though nearly a fourth of the fugitives were women, he massacred them all; and not content with mere bloodshed, added to the slaughter every outrage which can be inflicted on dead men or living women. It is affirmed that the ferocity of his followers could not even be sated without cannibalism; that they tore the hearts from their victims and feasted on them;* and the horrid tale is true, unless we can believe that they imposed on those who laid the statement before the Assembly, and in the wretched vanity of infamy boasted of atrocities which they had not had the hardihood to commit. So frightful was the tale, that the president of the Assembly fainted when he had read to the Assembly the letter which conveyed it; but it was a barren sensibility that prostrated him. The feud between the Jacobins and Girondins had already broken out; in their rivalry neither ventured to denounce crimes, however revolting to human nature, lest the faintest expression of disapproval might be interpreted as lukewarmness in the cause of the Revolution. Jourdan himself had the effrontery to return to Paris as one assured of impunity if not of approval. And as if it were not enough to pass such crimes over without notice, the Assembly even gave them a kind of sanction by a formal vote of amnesty to all who had been concerned in them.

An insurrection in St. Domingo afforded equally conclusive proof of the callousness of the Assembly to crime and suffering, and of its utter incapacity for every function of legislation or government. The eastern portion of the great island of St. Domingo

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* Prudhomme, iv. 21, quoted by Alison.

belonged to Spain; the western portion to France; and all her other colonies together did not equal in importance that single settlement, which, like all the other West Indian islands, to whatever European power they might belong, contained but few white men and was cultivated wholly by slaves. It had also a numerous free black and mulatto population, who looked on themselves as the legitimate lords of the soil, and on the French as intruders. But as they possessed property sufficient to place them in comfortable circumstances, they had acquiesced in their deprivation of political privileges, till the Declaration of the Rights of Man had been passed by the Constituent Assembly, and copies of it had been sent to the island by a society calling itself the Friends of the Blacks, and numbering among its members Lafayette and Barnave, with Condorcet and Brissot. The knowledge that a party existed in France ready to uphold them, excited in them a desire for power to which they had hitherto been indifferent. From claiming an equality with the white planters, it was but a step to resolve to assert over them the superiority of force. During the reign of the Constituent Assembly a mulatto named Ogé had been sent to France to plead for the rights of his coloured free brethren, and under the promptings of the society had gone so far beyond his instructions as to demand the emancipation of the slaves also. As he failed to obtain his petition, on his return he attempted to accomplish his object by force; and with a body of 200 negroes ventured to attack the garrison at the town of Cap Français. He was easily defeated, taken prisoner, and broken on the wheel by the prompt sentence of the governor. But as he was moving to the scaffold he prophesied that his fellow-mulattoes would avenge him; and the prophecy, as is

often the case, contributed to its own fulfilment. The whole free black population of the district resolved to justify his anticipations; but, as they had learnt by his failure that they were insufficient by themselves to cope with European discipline, they now sought allies amongst the slaves. They gladly promised their aid, and, with the secrecy of design which has at all times been a characteristic of the negro race, planned an insurrection. The 30th of September, the last day of the Constituent Assembly, was that fixed upon by the leaders. On that night, fifty thousand slaves rose as one man upon their masters in the rich district around Cap Français. Every house, every factory, was set on fire. Almost every human being who sought to escape from the flames was ruthlessly slaughtered with all the aggravations of cruelty which the conquerors had ever beheld in their own uncivilized countries. Men, women, and children were sawn asunder, were burnt alive, were torn limb from limb; a few were saved by their own slaves whose attachment they had secured by long kindness; a few escaped into the other districts. But over a large portion of the French colony the whites were exterminated. Though it might have been supposed that outrages committed upon their own countrymen by the despised negroes would have been viewed with indignation even by men who had no pity for the victims of Avignon, it did not prove to be the case. The minister of war did indeed send out a reinforcement to the garrison, to prevent a repetition of such horrors; but in the Assembly the atrocities which had been committed, their causes, and the way in which the perpetrators should be dealt with, were made party questions. Brissot and his friends charged the Constituent Assembly with the guilt, as having provoked

the insurrection by their refusal of emancipation to the whole negro race. The constitutionalists and every friend of order and law more truly branded him and his friends as the stimulators of it by their philanthropic declamations. But these last were overpowered on every division, and finally the insurgents, murderers, ravishers, and torturers as they were, were rewarded rather than punished, the Assembly judging that the best way to prevent a repetition of such horrors was to grant the negroes the privileges for the sake of which they had committed them, and to confer on them an equality of political rights which, as will be hereafter seen, led in time to a renewal of the insurrection, and ultimately to the entire loss of the colony to France.

The impunity and even indulgence thus shown to the worst outbreaks of ferocity made the ministers solicitous to lose no time in organizing a new force which the constitution had appointed to replace the king's old body-guards. The ministry itself underwent some change, which on the whole was pleasing and favorable to the king. He was unwilling indeed to part with Montmorin, who was weary of his post, and could not be prevailed on to retain it; but De Lessert, who was now transferred to it, had gradually acquired his full confidence, and the whole kingdom did not contain a more devoted Royalist than the new minister of marine, M. Bertrand de Moleville. He combined, however, abundant prudence with his resolute loyalty, and his exercise of it afforded a remarkable proof of the single-hearted sincerity of the king himself. Bertrand had not previously been in the secrets of the court, and had believed it to be at least possible that there was some foundation for the assertions of the Jacobins that the king was

planning a counter-revolution. But when he intimated the idea to the king, coupled with the expression of an unwillingness, if such were the case, to embark in a struggle of the fruitlessness and danger of which he felt assured, Louis did not hesitate to remove his scruples by a declaration that both he and the queen, though not indeed approving of every article of the constitution, were nevertheless firmly resolved to discourage every attempt to tamper with or modify it, now that it had become the established law of the land by his own sanction and oath to observe it.* There was also a new minister of war, the Count de Narbonne, who, though belonging rather to the constitutionalists than to the old Royalists, was nevertheless firmly attached to the person of the king and to all his family. He had shown his fidelity by acting as the escort to the king's aunts when they fled from Paris at the beginning of the year, and was therefore altogether a minister whose presence at the council board was a source of comfort and confidence to Louis; he was also a man of brilliant abilities, though perhaps of a showy rather than of a solid character; a fluent speaker, and fertile in resources. Changes in the ministry were in one sense of less national importance now than formerly, since they implied no change in the policy of the kingdom whether foreign or domestic. Necker had from the first formation of the National Assembly suffered the whole authority, except in matters of finance, to fall into its hands; and its successor, the Legislative Assembly, showed no inclination to admit any other order of proceeding. The ministers were not allowed to take the initiative in a single measure, but were reduced to the condition of an executive body, whose

* Dr. Moore, ii. 430.

duty as to the nation was merely to carry out the decrees of the Assembly.. They acted, however, also as personal councillors of the king, whenever he might desire their advice as to his personal conduct, and never yet had Louis had greater need that his advisers should be both able and well affected. Not only were the Jacobins in the Assembly, and still more in their club, making and stimulating fresh attacks on the remnant of authority that was left to him, but he was also experiencing in the abridgement of his personal comforts the full effects of the agitation and disorder into which they had thrown the whole kingdom and the blows which they had thus given to the public credit. The treasury was utterly bankrupt, the flight of the richer classes had rendered taxation almost unproductive. The market was so glutted with royal domains, ecclesiastical estates, and other confiscated properties, that purchasers could not be found; and the assignats were so plentiful, and the security on which they were issued seemed at the moment so valueless, that they too for a time were as great a failure as a source of income as any other expedient. On no one did the general poverty fall so severely as on the court. The king's civil list was paid monthly in assignats, which no one would take for even a quarter of their value; and for the latter part of each month it was not uncommon for him and the queen to be absolutely destitute.* They were unwilling to accept the offerings of their loyal adherents because they saw no prospect of being able to repay them;

* "Elle [Madame Ossun, dame d'atours de la reine] m'a dit qu'il y a trois semaines le roi et la reine avaient été neuf jours sans un sou. . . . . Elle [la reine] avait dit à Madame d'Ossun, 'N'étant pas sûre de pouvoir le rendre je ne veux pas nuire à ceux qui nous sont dévoués.'"—Le Prince de Nassau à l'Impératrice de Russie. "Louis XVI., Marie Antoinette," &c. iv. 318, No. 634. Cf. Mme. de Campan, c. xxi.

but, had they not availed themselves of that resource, they would often have wanted absolute necessaries. At the same time the supervision exercised over all their movements was augmented till their captivity became as close as Lafayette had made it on their first return from Varennes. A sentinel was stationed day and night at the door of their apartment, with orders to open it every two hours so as to assure himself of their presence: and so general was the impression entertained by those rude soldiers that no affront which they might offer to the royal family would be unpalatable to their employers, that in one instance a corporal of the guard took upon himself to fasten up their apartments from nine at night to the same hour in the morning, so as absolutely to prevent all ingress or egress.*

But in one matter, which subsequently proved of the greatest importance, the new ministers were not able to prevent the court from taking an ill-advised and unfortunate course. During the last month of its existence, the Constituent Assembly, with the acquiescence of Lafayette,† had broken up the national guard of the capital into separate legions, and had suppressed the office of commander-in-chief of the whole body. Scarcely any measure showed less foresight on the part of its authors, or was attended with more pernicious consequences. The events of July had proved that the national guard was disposed to resist and able to overpower the violence of the mob; but this division of the body broke down its unity and

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* "Louis XVI., Marie Antoinette," &c., No. 614, letter of Mme. Elizabeth, date Nov. 16, 1791, and 634, letter of Prince de Nassau Siégen, date Dec. 16, 1791.

† Dumas affirms that the alteration was made at the suggestion of La fayette himself.—Mémoires, i. 216.

strength, and enabled those who were already planning further outbreaks to sow discord among the different legions, and to tamper with and corrupt them all; and to it more than to any other cause was owing the success of the rioters in the ensuing year. Its immediate effect was to leave Lafayette without military employment; and, as such a position was irksome to his restless temper, he became a candidate for the mayoralty of Paris, just vacant by the resignation of Bailly. It was becoming a post of great consequence, since the weakness of the royal authority tended to make the mayor the absolute dictator of the capital; and the Jacobin party consequently, looking on Lafayette as pledged to, if indeed not the very chief of the constitutionalists, were above all things anxious to prevent his success and to secure the office for one of their own body. They accordingly put forward Pétion as a rival candidate to him, and, as among the citizens with whom the election lay the two parties were nearly equally strong, it was soon seen that the court, which had still more influence among them than it had retained over any other portion of the nation, had the power of deciding the contest, and that the candidate whom it should favour would prevail. With a perversity of judgment which, if not unaccountable was lamentable, it declared for Pétion. It was true that Lafayette had no attachment whatever to the king or queen personally; indeed that they had suffered great wrongs at his hand, and that, as far as his conduct depended on principles of personal loyalty, no trust whatever could be reposed in him. But on the other hand, the transactions of July had placed him in open and irreconcileable hostility to the Jacobins, and might well be taken as a pledge of his fidelity to the constitution, with the supporters of which he had now professedly identified himself. It

was certain too that, in spite of the recent changes in its organization, he had still great influence among the national guard, who were mainly constitutionalists and universally unfriendly to, and hated by the mob. But Pétion was the avowed enemy of both the constitution and the crown. And it might have been thought plain that to place in the hands of such a man the power requisite to give effect to his enmity, must be more dangerous than to vest it in one who professed friendliness, even though his adherence was based on principles different from those which the court wished to prevail. Unhappily the king and his advisers looked upon him as cherishing projects of deeper ambition than he had ever entertained or was probably capable of conceiving. In their eyes he was perhaps already contemplating to make the office which he was seeking a stepping-stone for the higher dignity of mayor of the palace, and they had no inclination to enable a second Pepin to depose his nominal master and seat himself upon his throne. At the same time, though fully aware of the Jacobin principles of Pétion, they thought him a man of too little ability to become formidable, and even cherished a hope that, if he owed his election to their interference, gratitude might win him over to the constitution, and that they might thus convert a foe into a supporter.* With these views they gave him their support, and Lafayette, greatly chagrined at his ill-success, retired to his country seat.

The Jacobins were proportionally elated. They felt

* The queen spoke plainly to her confidants. "M. de Lafayette will not be the Mayor of Paris in order that he may the sooner become the Mayor of the Palace. Pétion is a Jacobin, a republican; but he is a fool, incapable of ever becoming the leader of a party; he would be a nullity as mayor, and besides, the very interest he knows we take in his nomination may bind him to the king."—"History of the Girondins," vi. 22.

that they had gained a victory; they knew its value; and their leaders in the Assembly at once brought forward measures, one of the chief recommendations of which was probably the displeasure with which the court was certain to regard them. They passed one decree against the priests, depriving all who still refused to take the oath to the new ecclesiastical constitution of the stipends for which their former preferments had been commuted; placing them under the strictest supervision of the authorities in the different departments; and rendering them liable to instant banishment if they should presume to discharge their ministerial functions in private. The constitutionalists opposed it in vain: they could hardly obtain a hearing, while the Girondin Isnard rendered the debate especially remarkable by an open profession of atheism, the first avowal which had yet been publicly made of that creed of blasphemy which it was subsequently attempted to force by law on the whole nation. Another decree against the emigrants was enacted with even greater unanimity. If it was of greater severity, it must be acknowledged that it was more provoked; but it was at the same time to a great extent inoperative. It was divided into two classes: the first relating solely to the Count de Provence, whom it summoned to return to France within six months, under penalty of forfeiting his right to the regency, if it should hereafter be decided to appoint one; the second was addressed to the rest of the body, declaring their being assembled in a state of preparation for war on the frontiers of the kingdom in itself an act of treason, and condemning all to death and confiscation of their estates who persisted in their absence from the country after the commencement of the coming year. It was remarkable

that the little opposition that was made to this latter decree came not from the constitutionalists, but from a section of the more speculative revolutionists, led by Condorcet. He was at all times hostile to the punishment of death, and proposed as an amendment, that the emigrants should be required never to bear arms against France, nor to concert hostilities against her with foreign powers. But he was easily overborne by Brissot, who on this occasion spoke with a vehemence of plausible declamation which gave him great weight in the future deliberations of the Assembly.

But in these decrees the partisans of violence had gone too far. The emigrants, indeed, as far as their own conduct was concerned, found sympathy in no quarter; nor did any other party desire to bring them back with half the fervour or sincerity of the king's ministers. Bertrand has left on record his belief that their return would of all others have been the most effectual means to restore the king to his former popularity; that it would have revived in much of its old strength the Royalist party throughout the kingdom, and have enabled it in the contests which no one could fail to see were impending, to turn the scale in its favour.* But in spite of these professions of loyalty to Louis, they seemed by their conduct to have chosen his brother for their leader rather than him; and the Count de Provence was immovably obstinate alike in his fears and in his confidence in his own opinion. He even endeavoured to seduce others who had not emigrated to join him, circulating among those of highest rank an invitation in which he assumed the title of Regent of the king-

* "Histoire de la Révolution," par M. Bertrand de Moleville, vi. 42.

dom, and summoned them to join him at Coblentz, offering to supply money for their journey if they were in want of funds; and threatening those who neglected the invitation, that when the French nobility had reconquered their rights, they should be excluded from the privileges which would be restored to those who had obeyed;* while to the decree of the Assembly which summoned him to return to France, he replied by a silly and undignified parody, enjoining the deputies to return within the same period of two months to common sense, on pain of being thought fit for a madhouse.† Still the leaders of the Assembly had gone too far in their enactments of confiscation and death against the emigrants, and of confiscation and exile against the priests. They had roused opposition not only in their own body, but among the people out of doors. Even more significant than the opposition of Condorcet was a petition which was presented to the king by the directory of the department of the Seine, begging him to refuse his assent to the decree against the priests. It did not put their case on very high grounds, since those who framed it were contented to argue that, as every man ought to be at liberty to choose his religion, it was inconsistent with this principle to treat as a crime the adherence of the priests to theirs; but it was specially important from the character of the signers. The first name appended to it was that of Talleyrand, who was generally understood to have drawn it, and who was not more notorious for the

* "Chronique de Paris," No. 293. Quoted by M. Feuillet de Conches, iv. 267.

† His note ran: "Gens de l'Assemblée Française se disant, nationale, saine raison vous requiert, en vertu du titre i., chapitre i., section i., des lois imprescriptibles du sens commun, de rentrer en vous-mêmes dans le délai de deux mois à compter de ce jour; faute de quoi vous serez censés avoir abdiqué votre droit et la qualité d'être raisonnables, et ne serez plus considérés que comme des enragés dignes des petites maisons."—Collection of M. Feuillet de Conches, iv. 268.

laxity of his religious principles, or for his support of the first steps of the Revolution, than for his acuteness in discerning the temper of the times and the current of popular opinion. Others, such as the Duke de Liancourt, if inferior in capacity were very similar in character; and it seemed to the ministers that what such men objected to so formally and publicly could not be generally approved of, and that there could be no danger in the king, in this instance, indulging the desire to which he was prompted by his conscience, and putting his veto on the decrees.

He did so, with the exception of one article. He sanctioned that which summoned his brother to return, and refused his consent to those which imposed penalties on the great body of the emigrants and on the nonjuring priests. And with a view of softening his refusal he visited the Assembly on the 14th of December, to explain the steps which he himself had taken with respect to the emigrants. They showed both the vehemence and the deep sincerity of his own wishes.* He had issued to the governors of the different seaports a circular signed by his own hand, in which he remonstrated earnestly with the sailors who were understood to be emigrating. He pointed out to them that those who thus deserted their country were mistaking their duty to that country, to him as their king, and to themselves; that the present aspect of the nation, desirous to return to order and to submission to the laws, removed every pretext for such conduct. He set before them his own example, and bade them remain at their posts as he was remaining at his; and in language more impressive than that of command exhorted them not to turn a deaf ear to his prayers;†

* "History of the Girondins," vi. 11.

† See a letter on the subject from Louis himself to the Baron de Breteuil, Dec. 14, 1791.—Collection of M. Feuillet de Conches. No. 630.

while at the same time De Lessart, as the foreign secretary, addressed a letter in his name to the whole body of those who had already emigrated, expostulating with them in equally explicit terms; declaring that the king looked on those as his real friends who remained and united with him in order to enforce and show obedience to the laws, and to re-establish peace and order in the kingdom. The king, he said, had accepted the constitution in the hope of putting an end to civil discord; but that object could never be gained if those who were equally with himself interested in its attainment abandoned it in abandoning their country. Nor had Louis limited his efforts to the issue of his commands to his own subjects. He had addressed himself also to the Electors of Trèves, Mayence, and some of the other petty German princes whose territories, bordering on the French frontier, were the principal resort of the emigrants; demanding that they should cease to give them shelter, and announcing to them that, if by the 15th of the ensuing January they had not removed them, he should consider their non-compliance with his demand a sufficient ground for war.

And he gave a proof at the same time that this was not an idle threat. He himself quitted the Assembly as soon as he had finished speaking; but Narbonne, as minister of war, remained behind. From his first entrance into the ministry he had adopted the practice of communicating all his plans to the Assembly in order to conciliate its goodwill, with the ulterior and patriotic view of so gaining also its favour for the king. And in this spirit he now announced that with as little delay as possible a force of a hundred and fifty thousand men would be moved towards the frontier, and that the veteran Marshal Luckner, with

Marshal Rochambeau and Lafayette, had been selected to command it; and he invited the deputies to authorize a levy of fifty-one thousand men to raise the military force of the nation to its war complement. But the mention of war caused great divisions in the Assembly. There were not wanting pretexts to justify a quarrel with the German potentates, and especially with the emperor. For those princes, taking, as was natural, a deep interest in the condition of France, and in the humiliation and manifest danger of the royal family, had throughout the summer been busily negotiating for mutual co-operation; had concluded treaties and signed declarations, every one of which was open to the charge of being a menacing interference with the affairs and government of France, if that appearance had not been partly neutralized by their number, which was calculated to create a belief that the energy of the contracting parties had expended itself in words. But though every party in France thought it becoming to express indignation at the arrogant language used towards the country, those who were really willing to go to war were few. The king could not possibly be sincerely anxious to quarrel with princes whose conduct, whether judicious or not, was certainly dictated by goodwill towards himself. The constitutionalists desired peace as affording the only chance for gradually securing tranquillity; though they subsequently changed their minds on this point, and believed that war would be more desirable as being likely to unite all parties in the defence of the country. The bulk of the Jacobins were desirous of peace, because, as they had no men of military reputation in their body, all commands in both fleet and army must necessarily be bestowed on those unconnected with them, and every one unconnected with them was hostile to them. The

Girondin section of this party stood alone in their wish for war. They above all things desired the deposition of the king; and they reckoned that, if the French army should be victorious, their success would disable those who were most eager and might be most able to support his throne; while, if the enemy should prevail, it would be easy to represent their success as the fruit of the mismanagement if not of the treachery of the king's generals and ministers.

However, the levies were ordered; Rochambeau at his request was introduced into the Assembly to thank the members for the approval which some of them had expressed of his appointment, and to explain his views of military operations. But the emperor showed anxiety to avoid furnishing any fresh ground for attacking him. The electors demanded his aid as head of the empire in the event of their territories being invaded; but, though he did not absolutely refuse them his protection, he made it conditional on their abstaining from giving France just provocation by sheltering and countenancing the emigrants. In so doing he was not only affording no party in Paris any ground of complaint, he was even co-operating with those who condemned the emigration. But he departed from this prudent line of conduct when he allowed his minister Kaunitz to write a letter to be read to the Assembly in which he made his promise, that the emperor would do all in his power to discountenance emigration and the emigrants, conditional on the conduct of the Assembly itself, and on its behaving towards the king with the respect which belonged to him by the constitution, and emancipating itself from the dominion of the Clubs, which were the real cause of half the evils of the country.

The letter was meant to be conciliatory: but was

most impolitic. It was putting an additional weapon in the hands of the king's enemies; for how could a foreign sovereign have any right to dictate to the legislative assembly of another country? And, though all that the emperor said of the mischievous power of the Clubs was true, he was adding to that power by denouncing them in a state paper. The extent of the mistake thus committed was instantly seen. The Girondins were induced by it for a moment to give up their differences with the pure Jacobins. Brissot who not long before had nearly come to an open quarrel with Robespierre, seized the opportunity to reconcile himself to him. And the Jacobin Club as a body felt that it had gained so much strength with the people by being thus made the mark for the enmity of an absolute monarch (for though his denunciation had been general, no one doubted that that was the club especially aimed at), that it could venture to act more openly than ever against its enemies in Paris. The Feuillants Club had been established in avowed opposition to it, and was especially obnoxious to it from the circumstance that Lafayette belonged to it; for the Jacobin leaders had never forgotten his conduct in the Champ de Mars. They resolved to suppress it, and the manner in which they did so shows how complete, in spite of the show of a ministerial executive, of a mayor and a numerous staff of municipal authorities, was the anarchy which was reigning in the unhappy city of Paris. As none of the real chiefs of the Jacobins had seats in this second Assembly the lead of their party in that body had fallen into the hands of three men, Merlin, Chabot, and Bazire, so utterly devoid of talent or character that even the terrors of their club could not save them from the ridicule of the streets; but

the little urchins that played in the gutters sang rhymes of equal contempt for the whole triumvirate.* Robespierre and Danton held them in undisguised scorn. But still when they proposed measures of violence, even they could obtain a hearing. And at one of the evening sittings of the club in the beginning of 1792 Merlin and Legendre the butcher proposed to adjourn to the Feuillants and put them down by force. The members sprang from their seats with enthusiasm, and rushed into the street to march against their unsuspecting enemies. Those who had not swords provided themselves with hatchets, bludgeons, pikes, or any other weapon they could find on their way: the mob as they passed fell into their ranks. Though there were several military men among the Feuillants, they only talked of resistance: instead of defending themselves they applied to Pétion for protection as mayor of the city; but got for their answer that, though the law forbade them to be attacked, the voice of the people was against them, and to the voice of the people he was bound to listen. The members fled for that night. The next day they presented a complaint of the treatment to which they had been subjected to the Assembly; but obtained no more redress from that body than they had received protection from Pétion, who indeed justified his inaction and their discomfiture by a repetition of his assertion of the supremacy of the will of the people over all other law.

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* "Connaissez-vous rien de plus sot
Que Merlin, Bazire, et Chabot?
A-t-on vu rien de plus coquin
Que Chabot, Bazire, et Merlin?
Non; il n'existe rien de pire
Que Merlin, Chabot, et Bazire."
—Moore, ii. 467.

Weak and timid as the Feuillants had proved themselves, their suppression was nevertheless unfavorable to the king, as showing that there was no longer safety for his champions even when marshalled in an organized and numerous body. It was still more unfortunate for him that dissensions began to break out among his acknowledged advisers, which ended in the dissolution of the ministry. The winter had been occupied by negotiations with the emperor, which had been conducted by De Lessart with great skill and in a peaceful spirit. Bertrand agreed with him in his deep conviction that the preservation of peace was above all things essential for the safety of the throne. But Narbonne was eager for war; Cahier de Gerville, the minister of the interior, entertained the same sentiments; and, as they could only hope to carry their point by getting rid of their colleagues, they began to intrigue against them both in the court and in the Assembly. They were seconded by Madame de Staël, though her position as the wife of an ambassador ought to have warned her, above every woman in France, of the impropriety of interfering in the composition of the Government to which her husband was accredited. Unluckily, though a woman of most brilliant and solid talents, she was as restless as she was able; and, as Necker's daughter, she had a peculiar influence with a party which was still considerable in point of numbers. Her friendship had contributed to procure his office for Narbonne; and she thought herself therefore the more justified in upholding him in it. To turn the scale against the opposite party she now prevailed on Lafayette to write Narbonne a letter conjuring him for the sake of the country to remain at his post. Narbonne paraded the letter; and not only wrote but made public a silly and mischievous reply to it in

which he professed to lament the difference of opinion that existed between his colleagues and himself; but it had an effect exactly opposite to that which he desired. It was an avowal of a close connexion with one whom, above all others, the king and queen most distrusted, and it was a manifest attempt on the part of that person to dictate who should or who should not be ministers. As such Louis resented it, and dismissed Narbonne; but the step did not enable him to retain De Lessart. Though there was little in common between Narbonne and the Girondins except their desire for war, that feeling was sufficient to make Brissot and his party furious at his dismissal, while they also saw in it an opening to raise themselves to office. They carried a vote that the Assembly regretted the loss of his services, and then they proceeded to an open attack on the foreign minister. There was a diplomatic committee, of which Brissot himself was the chairman, and in that capacity he denounced several of De Lessart's despatches to Kaunitz and to the Marquis de Noailles, the ambassador at Vienna, as compromising the dignity of France by the eagerness which they showed for peace. The accusation was absurd. To strengthen it he attacked the minister at the same time on his general statements and language. He selected for especial condemnation a passing expression which he attributed to him that "the majority of the nation was firmly attached to the constitution of 1791." "The traitor!" said he; "to dare to imply that there is a minority which does not approve of it!" Instead of laughing at so absurd a perversion of facts and logic, the Assembly cheered it uproariously. Vergniaud was even more violent, and equally unreasonable; he charged De Lessart with being the real cause of the massacres at Avignon by the un-

willingness which he had shown to promote the annexation of that city to France; and this accusation was equally ratified by the applause of his hearers.

De Lessart's fate was evidently almost decided; and it happened most unfortunately that just at this moment the Emperor Leopold died, not without strong suspicions of poison; and thus the threatened minister was deprived of such support as he might have derived from that prince's judicious and zealous preference for peace. Dumas and his party in the Assembly laboured earnestly and disinterestedly to save him, but the vicious system which refused the ministers seats in the Assembly prevented him from defending himself, unless he applied for admission and a hearing, which he refused to do;* Dumas himself spoke fearlessly in his defence; and, when he could not prevail, sent him timely warning that the Assembly was about to decide on his impeachment, and urged him to save himself by instant flight. Louis added his entreaties; but De Lessart, though escape was certainly in his power, with rare self-devotion declared that such a step would be more pernicious to the king himself than his arrest. It would, he said, lead his enemies to charge Louis himself with the offences for which they were now about to make him the scapegoat. Louis, who had learned thoroughly to appreciate his worth, his sagacity, and his loyalty to his own best interests, wept when he parted from him, though he could not foresee the fate which was prepared for him. He was arrested and sent to Orleans to be tried by the high court established in that city, as has already been mentioned, for the trial of offences against the nation. He himself was confident of acquittal; and apparently his enemies were of the same opinion, for they took no

* Memoirs of Dumas, i. 265.

steps to bring him to trial; but he remained uncondemned, to perish in the massacres of September even more miserably than if an unjust condemnation had delivered him to the executioner.

The ministry was dissolved, and the king was helpless. Even had he been able to exercise his own choice as to its successors, he would not have known where to look, but he felt that he was not. The Girondins, as having dealt the last decisive blows in the contest, were in possession of the field of battle; and he had no resource but to place official authority in the hands of those who had thus shown themselves possessed of the real power. Those members who had seats in the Assembly were ineligible for office; and consequently it was only from the lower ranks of the party that the ostensible rulers of the State could be selected. Three of them, Lacoste, the minister of marine, Degraves, the minister of war, and Duranton, minister of justice, were so obscure that they had never even been thought worth introducing into the Jacobin Club. A fourth, Roland, minister of the interior, an old man, originally a tradesman of Rouen, and afterwards an inspector of manufactures, was equally devoid of talent; but notorious for a reputation of surly honesty, for a deep-seated hatred of all his superiors in rank, and still more as the husband of a woman of whom we have already spoken as probably the first person in the whole kingdom who set before herself the murder of the king and queen as the chief objects to be compassed. She was, however, a woman of brilliant talents, and of great powers of fascination among men of such a class as composed the Girondin party. She was also ambitious of exercising power, and the very incapacity of her husband, and of most of his colleagues, was gratifying to her, from the extent

to which it enabled her to sway their deliberations. For the next few months the real council-chamber of the State was her drawing-room; and no influence could be more fatal than hers to the king and to all that was left of the monarchy. Narrow-minded and uneducated as he was, Roland himself had a certain amount of honesty and candour which, when he was brought into daily contact with Louis, allowed him to be deeply impressed with the frankness and sincerity of the king, and with the resolute good faith with which, in spite of his disapproval of many parts of the constitution, he resolved to maintain it because he had sworn to do so;* but his wife was untiring in her efforts to prevent such feelings of compassion and loyalty from taking any permanent root, or producing fruit. She held but one language, that the king must be destroyed; and availing herself of the ascendancy possessed by a strong mind over a weak one, she was able, in spite of his secret convictions, to keep him steady in the path which she had marked out for him.

M. Clavière, the new minister of finance, who, singularly enough, was like Necker a native of Geneva, was a man of more skill in his department than any of his colleagues who have as yet been mentioned; but the man who was soon seen to be the presiding genius of the new Government was the minister of foreign affairs, General Dumouriez. As a young officer in the reign of Louis XV. he had gained considerable reputation in Poland; and the same monarch had afterwards employed him in one or two secret missions. During the present reign he had had no professional employment; but, being desirous of recommending himself to the king at the beginning of the Revolution, when the first symptoms of mutiny ap-

* Lamartine, xiii. 9.

peared among the troops in Paris, he had volunteered his services, and tendered his counsels to him; recommending measures of vigour and resolution which if they had been adopted might have changed the whole character of subsequent events. In the preceding year he had been employed by a committee of the Constituent Assembly, in conjunction with the Girondin Gensonné, on a mission half civil and half military, to examine the state of the department known afterwards as La Vendée; which was already showing symptoms of that discontent with the progress of the Revolution, of that attachment to the rule and race of its ancient sovereign, and to the old religion of the country, which involved it in its subsequent heroic, disastrous, but glorious struggle with the enemies of both king and God. In the discharge of his duties Dumouriez had displayed an acuteness of penetration and a clearness of views as to the future which gave him a great influence over his less business-like colleague; and the character which Gensonné gave of him to his fellow Girondins contributed to procure his nomination to ministerial office; for he seemed for the time to have been entirely weaned from the political views which originally had led him to desire and to point out the way to crush the Revolution in the bud. He had been piqued by the king's rejection of his proffered services; and, under the impulse partly of mortified vanity and partly of a desire for active employment, which led him when repulsed on one side to seek to ingratiate himself with the other, had been encouraging and openly expressing sentiments as little favorable to the preservation of the royal authority as were entertained by any member of the Jacobin Club. But after a short time the frequent intercourse with the king which was the consequence of his appointment

revived his old and inborn feelings of loyalty: he gave him the best advice; he zealously endeavoured to avert the measures which threatened his authority. So manifest was the superiority both of his talents and of his integrity, that his colleagues became jealous of him.* After a time they sought to get rid of him by offering him a military command, which his consciousness of military genius must have led him to desire; and which his sense of duty or the necessities of his personal safety did not permit him to refuse. Had he remained in Paris through August and September it is possible he might have been able to avert the horrors which finally crushed both sovereignty and sovereign. He showed his sincerity by trying to avenge them, and incurring banishment and the ruin of all his personal views in the attempt. In a happier time he might have incurred the censure of rigid virtue as fickle and unscrupulous; in the age in which he lived it would be unjust to deny him the praise not only of high professional skill and bravery, but of civil ability such as no one had displayed since the death of Mirabeau, and of clear-sighted, loyal good faith such as in this last year no one else exerted in behalf of the hapless Louis.

Dumouriez, however, was as anxious for war as his colleagues, and had now the power to ensure it. For the conciliatory tone in which De Lessart had discussed the questions arising between France and the empire, he substituted a language of asperity and dictation. Kaunitz could hardly avoid replying in a

* Even Lamartine admits this. "The people applauded him as he quitted the Assembly. These applauses sounded gloomily in the council-chamber of Madame Roland. The popularity of Dumouriez rendered her jealous; it was not in her eyes the popularity of virtue, and she coveted it all for her husband and his party."—"History of the Girondins," xv. 1.

similar strain; and at last, on the 20th of April, Louis, sorely against his will, was compelled by his ministers to go down to the Assembly, to declare that all his efforts for the preservation of peace had failed, and to propose an instant declaration of war. It was agreed to with scarcely a single dissentient voice. Becquet alone tried to suggest that the nation required peace to give the constitution time to settle into working order; but he could hardly obtain a hearing, and was driven back to his seat with derision. Prussia was so connected with the policy of the empire by recent treaties, that she also was involved in the same hostile declaration. But the nation was not daunted by the knowledge that she had thus to deal with two enemies, of whom the least powerful had inflicted on her crushing defeats when they last measured their strength together, and the news that war was declared was received in every department with the same enthusiasm which had been shown for it in the Assembly.

Dumouriez had indeed reason to reckon on speedy and decisive success; Narbonne had left him an army of above a hundred thousand men, in a perfect state of equipment and ready for instant action; while the allies had made no preparation whatever. The recent dismantling of so many of the renowned fortresses which at the beginning of the century had protected the Flemish frontier, had left that rich province almost defenceless; and General Beaulieu, the Austrian commander-in-chief, had scarcely more than twenty thousand men available; a force insufficient properly to garrison the few towns which were still defensible, without leaving a single regiment to meet the French in the field. Dumouriez had formed a plan for the campaign at once audacious, able, and original; and, if his duty could have permitted him to execute it in

person, a few days would have made him master of the Netherlands. Rochambeau, with one army of about forty thousand men was to watch the frontier at its northern point from Lille to the sea; Luckner, with a similar force, was to perform a similar duty on the Rhine; while between these two, Lafayette, with a somewhat larger army than either, was to attack Namur, which was however in no condition to make a protracted resistance; and having captured it was to march at once on Brussels and Liége. No effort which the emperor could make could have saved the whole province from being instantly overrun. But the French troops, though numerous were undisciplined, and their general utterly incapable. One division of four thousand men, under General Dillon, fled at the first sight of a detachment from the garrison of Tournay, murdered their commander, and never halted till they had found shelter in Lille from an enemy which had never thought of pursuing them. A similar force, under General Biron, behaved equally ill; and Lafayette, on hearing of these events, made no attempt whatever to execute the rest of the minister's plan; but retreated into France, and remained there in a state of complete inaction.

Three months afterwards, Dumouriez, being no longer a minister, took the field himself; but by that time the allies were in a very different condition. They had brought down large armies to the scene of action, and now the character of the campaign was exactly reversed. They were so far the more powerful, that nothing but the incompetency of their own generals could have saved the French army from annihilation and Paris from capture; but that, and the energy and audacious tenacity with which they were encountered by Dumouriez, too great a soldier and too

shrewd a judge of the character of his friends in Paris to be ignorant of the double risk which he was incurring, did save them.

The Girondins had forced the king into war with the avowed design of stripping him of the remnant of authority that the constitution had left him. But the shrewdest of them could not have discerned beforehand the degree in which the mismanagement of the enemy would aid their projects. Louis himself, before the commencement of operations on either side, had taken a step to be justified neither on grounds of propriety nor of policy, and at variance with his repeated declarations of a resolution to adhere to the constitution which he had accepted. Though he had been forced to dismiss his former ministers from his service, he still frequently consulted the most active of them, M. Bertrand de Moleville, in private; and he himself was rapidly giving way to an apathetic dejection, which more than ever disabled him from resisting advice energetically given, however injudicious or inconsistent with his general purposes it might be. As it was clear to every one that neither of the princes against whom he had declared war entertained any feelings but those of goodwill towards himself, his advisers conceived the impracticable idea that the invading generals might be able to make this manifest by their operations; and that, if they avowed that the object of their hostility was not the king, nor the nation in general, but the faction which at present were triumphantly domineering over both nation and king, that faction, in spite of its possession of authority, would not be able to prevent the body of the people from sympathizing with instead of resisting them. And with this view they persuaded Louis to put

himself in communication with those whom he had just declared enemies of the country; to write them a letter suggesting the measures which they should adopt against his country, and to accredit to them a trustworthy messenger who, from a thorough knowledge of his sentiments, might be trusted to make arrangements favorable to his interests. The messenger, M. Mallet Dupan, the chief writer in the ablest Royalist newspaper, was chosen with great discrimination; for he had talents and address to make himself acceptable to the sovereigns to whom he was sent, and such prudence in executing his mission that no suspicion of it reached those against whom it was directed. Had its details become known, it would have required but little art on the part of the Girondin leaders to represent it as a violation of that article of the constitution which expressly provided that if the king should put himself at the head of an army, or direct the force of one against the nation, such conduct should in itself be an act of abdication; and to found on it a justification for at once driving him from the throne. Some of the views expressed in the letter were wise, and in harmony with the writer's most earnest convictions and wishes; as when he entreated above all things that the emigrants should not be allowed to form part of the hostile armies, or to take any part in the intended operations, lest their interference should stamp the rupture with the character of civil war. But when he proposed that the princes, as a preliminary to their expected invasion of the country, should issue a manifesto professing to make a distinction between its factions, averring that their hostility was directed only against the party which was putting constraint on the king, and threat-

ening the legislative assembly itself* with vengeance if it should commit any further outrage on his person, or family, or authority, he was in fact inviting them to interfere in the internal government of France in a way which no people of high spirit could be expected to brook, or ought to brook: while such threats of vengeance, which it might be impossible to execute, were manifestly calculated to provoke the very outrages which they denounced. And again, when he avowed that the course which he was recommending was intended to enable these foreign sovereigns to effect a counter-revolution in his behalf, he was renouncing the views to which he had pledged himself to this very Bertrand when he first called him to his counsels, and which that minister had then professed to consider the only ones which it was either safe or practicable to entertain and act upon.

There can be no doubt that such a letter was a violation of the constitution, and of every constitution which has ever laid down or implied rules for the conduct of a sovereign. The best justification of it is to be found in the incredible folly of those to whom it was addressed; which showed how greatly they stood in need of advice, and how incapable they were of acting steadily even on a plan which they had formally approved. They expressed to M. Dupan their entire agreement with his master's views, and their resolution to adopt them. And in ten days† afterwards

* The words referred to are—"Une déclaration énergique à l'Assemblée Nationale à la capitale, aux corps administratifs, aux municipalités, aux individus, qu'on les rend personnellement garants dans leurs corps et biens du moindre préjudice apporté à la personne de leurs majestés, de leurs familles, et aux citoyens quelconques." A copy of the entire letter was given by the son of M. M. Dupan to Professor Smyth, and is published by him in the appendix to his 26th lecture.

† The letter was presented to the King of Prussia on the 14th of July.

they compelled the Duke of Brunswick, the commander-in-chief of the Prussians, then preparing to cross the frontier with his army, to issue a manifesto, coinciding with the suggestions of Louis in their most impolitic parts; drawing the distinction between the different factions which he had recommended; but adding to them ferocious threats, such as neither the law of nations nor the laws of war had ever been supposed to justify. It declared* that "the inhabitants of towns, burghs, and villages, who should dare to defend themselves against his troops should be punished on the spot, and their houses burned or demolished. And that, if the least violence or outrage should be committed on the king, queen, or royal family, and if provision were not immediately made for their safety, preservation, and liberty, he would inflict a signal, rare, and memorable vengeance by delivering up the city of Paris to military execution and total destruction." The duke himself was not responsible for the proclamation, nor, it is said, were the ministers of the sovereigns who issued it. It was generally understood that the most objectionable clauses had been framed by Calonne and the Marquis de Limon, who stood the higher in the confidence of his brother emigrants because he had formerly been in the service of the Duke d'Orleans, but had renounced all connexion with that prince, and now professed the most entire devotion to the king; and that the German sovereigns, carried away by Calonne's plausible persuasiveness, had adopted it at once, and compelled

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and to the emperor on the 15th. The Duke of Brunswick's manifesto was dated the 25th.

* Alison, c. x. § 14, who gives a translation of the whole proclamation in a note, from which the extract in the text is abridged.

the duke to sign it in spite of his most earnest remonstrances.

The Duke of Brunswick had served under the great Frederick; but he had failed to learn or else had forgotten the tactics by which that great master of war had given the French defeat after defeat on one side of his dominions, and at the same time had proved a match for the whole power of Austria on the other. He was timid where he should have been bold; slow where he should have been unhesitating. He indeed invaded France, and took Longwy and Verdun; but Dumouriez, though he had scarcely more than twenty-five thousand men to oppose above three times their numbers, held him in check for three weeks in the forest of Argonne, till Kellermann and other generals joined him with divisions which made his force more nearly equal to the invaders. Thus reinforced, he offered them battle at Valmy; and, though nothing more ensued than a skirmish and a distant cannonade, in which neither army lost a thousand men, the duke was disheartened, and opened a negotiation with Dumouriez. The King of Prussia, who had joined his army in its advance, continued the negotiations. Dumouriez, quite aware that he was as powerless as ever to arrest the advance of the Prussians by force, brought other weapons besides his sword into play: he bribed the king's mistress, who, like the French ladies half a century before, made a part of her lover's staff; and Frederick, in spite of the eagerness which he expressed to save Louis, who was now a prisoner in the Temple, and whose impending fate was scarcely doubtful, agreed to evacuate France on condition of not being molested in his retreat; restored the towns which he had taken, and at the end of October recrossed the Rhine.

Dumouriez was thus left free to turn his whole force against the Austrians in the Netherlands. The Cabinet of Vienna had also profitted by the respite which Lafayette's unskilfulness had afforded them to strengthen their forces in that province; and while Dumouriez was confronting the Duke of Brunswick in Champagne, Duke Albert of Saxe Teschen routed a French division near Bruillé, and with fifteen thousand men laid siege to Lille. But the garrison was strong and resolute; and the retreat of the duke, with the corresponding advance of Dumouriez, compelled the Austrian prince to raise the siege, and fall back upon Mons. There he rejoined his commander-in-chief, General Clairfait, who on the northern side of that great fortress had taken up a position at Jemappes, which he had fortified with a number of heavily-armed redoubts, sufficient to counterbalance a great superiority of numbers. And such a precaution was necessary; for, in order to protect the frontier at the different points at which it was menaced, he had been compelled to divide his forces; and those which he had with him were so few, that the return of the archduke did not raise his numbers to above twenty thousand men. On the 6th of November Dumouriez, with forty thousand, fell upon him; but so well had the Austrian chosen his ground, and so superior was his artillery, that the victory was not only long doubtful, but seemed at one time to incline to his side. In the stubborn conflict by which at one time the French were driven back, the young Duke de Chartres, to whom Dumouriez had entrusted one division, showed not only great gallantry, but considerable skill; and in later days, when he was seated on the throne, flatterers ascribed to him the honour of having mainly contributed to turn the tide in favour of his countrymen.

But the day, when it seemed on the point of being lost, was in reality retrieved by Dumouriez himself. The frightful massacres which, as we shall presently have to relate, had already taken place in Paris, and the establishment of the revolutionary tribunal, showed him what fate was in store for him if he should be defeated; and as a last resource to avert it, he put himself at the head of a battalion of infantry, and charged the hostile batteries in person. Clairfait retreated: his loss of five thousand men hardly equalled that of the French; but he could not afford it equally. Dumouriez, who had not only the talent to gain, but the genius to improve a victory, gave him no respite, but pressed on in pursuit with great rapidity; drove him from Brussels, and from Liége; detached one division against Namur, another against Antwerp which took that great town and thus became master of the navigation of the Scheldt; while he himself pushed on, occupied Aix-la-Chapelle, and was preparing to invade Holland and lay siege to Maestricht, when in the last week of the year he received orders from the Government at Paris, which was becoming jealous of his success, to desist from active operations, and to give his army rest in winter quarters.

Brilliant as his campaign had been, and important in its influence on the future character of the war, as foreshadowing the energy of the revolutionary armies, and setting the first example of that ceaseless enterprize and rapidity of movement which Bonaparte more fully developed, and which led him to such astonishing triumphs; it nevertheless was so surpassed in magnitude, if not in political importance, by future exploits of the army, that it seems sufficient to give this brief outline of its achievements. But one episode in this Flemish war is of too romantic a cha-

racter to be passed over. We have already had more than one occasion to relate the ferocity displayed by women in the different riots that had taken place. The events at Paris which at the beginning of September made all Europe shudder, showed still more fearfully how complete the fever of revolution had unsexed those to whom, in general, pain and distress rarely looks in vain for sympathy and relief; and in another way the army of Dumouriez presented a singular illustration of the same fact. Two sisters, of the name of Ternig, whose father and brother were serving under him, quitted their home in men's apparel, and enlisted in a cavalry regiment. Their disguise was soon penetrated, but Dumouriez would not discharge them; keeping them, with the consent of their natural protectors, on his own staff, and often availing himself of their example to excite his soldiers to additional enthusiasm; for they were as fearless as the hardiest veterans. On the hard-fought day of Jemappes, when Clairfait's foresight seemed on the point of being rewarded with victory, when the French were wavering, and some battalions were actually falling back before the severity of the Austrian fire, Félicité, the younger of the two (she was barely sixteen), hastened down to the dispirited brigade; and now reproaching the men, now cheering them, with sword in one hand, pistol in the other, and the reins on the neck of her war-horse, led them back in person to the charge. It was not an undeserved compliment when Dumouriez ascribed his victory partly to the force of her example on his men, who, could not for shame sake quail before dangers which a girl could outface. Another of her exploits had a characteristically romantic termination. In a subsequent skirmish a young officer was stricken down, and instantly surrounded by some Austrian

hussars, who were preparing to slay him, when she perceived his danger. Collecting four or five troopers she dashed among the enemy, shot down two with her own hand, and carried off her countryman in safety. Though severely wounded he recovered, and his first thought was to seek his preserver; but when Dumouriez had been forced to fly from the country which he had served but too well, and to seek a shelter in foreign lands, the sisters too had fled. It was not till after a toilsome and long search that the grateful officer, who had been thus strangely saved, discovered them in Denmark, and persuaded Félicité to become his wife.*

In other quarters also the French arms were, during this year, successful. General Montesquiou overran Savoy, General Anselme took Nice; and we have recently seen how vividly the recollection of those first triumphs of the Revolution still dwells in the minds of the French people. But we may pass over the exploits of the French in that quarter, and also on the Rhine, where General Custine took but was unable to hold Frankfort, with a mere statement of the facts; and return to the unmilitary history of the occurrences in Paris; where every day, it may almost be said, was marked with incidents bringing nearer and portending more clearly the sad catastrophe which closed the first act of the Revolution.

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* "History of the Girondins," xxxvii. 1.

CHAPTER XLI.

DUMOURIEZ, who was honestly anxious to serve the State, did not propose to limit his energies to the discharge of the duties which belonged to his own department. Knowing the incompetency of his colleagues he aspired to become in substance, though not in name, the prime minister; and he relied on his own address to win over the king to adopt his counsels, and on the support of the Girondin party, by far the most eloquent in the Assembly, to persuade or perhaps to intimidate that body into the same course. He calculated and took precautions for overcoming every obstacle but one; but against that, as he did not foresee it, he took no steps to guard, and it must be at least doubtful if he could have surmounted it had he been ever so much forewarned. It had not occurred to him that the Jacobins outside the Assembly would employ sterner methods than persuasion to bend it to their purpose, and if it should prove too stubborn, or even if compliant, as soon as it had answered their purpose, would not hesitate to supersede it.

He was eager also to serve the king; in fact he saw no means of effectually and beneficially serving the State except by saving to him all his existing authority, and probably by eventually recovering for him some portions of the prerogatives that had been

wrested from him; and in the hope of effecting this he had marked out for Louis a very different line of conduct from that which he had hitherto adopted. He desired that, instead of allowing the Assembly to initiate and perform everything, Louis should take the reins from its hands by putting himself at the head of the Revolution; not, indeed, displaying more personal energy than before, for he did not so much design that Louis should act himself as that he should allow him to act for him. And in two interviews which almost immediately after his appointment the king, and afterwards the queen, granted him, he explained his views with a sincerity which was as evident as his sagacity; urging upon both that if they would extricate themselves from the dangers which surrounded them, they must give the nation reason to believe in their adherence to the Revolution; must sanction his holding language to foreign courts which should leave no doubt on that subject; and must also so far yield even points of conscience as to forbear thwarting the nation in measures on which it had set its heart; that thus in time he might be able to induce the nation to requite the king by a similar compliance with his wishes and feelings. Louis, who could appreciate frankness, and had been but little used of late to the deference of language and feeling which his new minister displayed towards him, was won by it to approve of the policy thus marked out for him; and promised never to misinterpret his motives if occasionally in public he should uphold sentiments or advocate measures adverse to his majesty's inclinations and, apparently, to his interests. Marie Antoinette at first held language very different from that of her husband; she avowed without disguise her indignation at the restrictions which had been placed on the

royal authority: and it was not strange that she felt the general disloyalty of the nation, and especially of the Parisians, more keenly than Louis, for the insults of the populace were chiefly directed against herself. It was but the day before, she declared to the general, that one of the sentinels on guard had dared to tell her that he would gladly have her head on his bayonet; while daily and hourly she saw men, and women too, treated with every extremity of outrage, whose only offence was a supposed respect for or attachment to herself. Dumouriez could only implore her to be patient, and to confide in his zeal to serve her, and in his superior knowledge how she could be most effectually served. He said with truth that he was better placed than either the king or herself for judging of the feelings of the people and the direction of events. She promised to be guided by his advice; but it was impossible but that she should secretly cling to the hope that the counter-revolution to which the king had alluded in his letter to the German sovereigns might be accomplished; for, except Dumouriez himself, probably no one in the kingdom believed in the power of the French armies to resist the allies. Robespierre, who had opposed the war in the Jacobin Club, had openly founded great part of his arguments on the inferiority of the French troops, both in numbers and equipment, to their expected enemies; and even the Girondin orators who had been the authors of the war, had not ventured to promise themselves victory, but only political advantages from defeat. And every day fresh insults were being offered to the king not only by the populace but in the Assembly itself. A deputy had the indecency to

* "History of the Girondins," xiii. 12, 13.

nickname him Monsieur Veto in a debate; the appellation so tickled the fancy of the populace that they discarded every other for it, and ribald songs were made upon the queen as Madame Veto, and sung under her windows.

She was also especially accused of holding frequent conferences with some of the king's former advisers, Bertrand, Montmorin, and Malouet being especially named, with the object of furthering the enterprize of the German invaders. The Jacobins, who invented the statement, and the demagogues of the Palais Royal who made it the theme of their nightly harangues, called her and her supposed councillors the Austrian Committee. They even sent forged messages to members of the Assembly inviting them to attend the queen in the apartments of the Princess de Lamballe. Bertrand prosecuted some of those who had been most precise in their statements as libellers, and the judge before whom the case was heard ordered Merlin, Chabot, and Bazire to be arrested as equally guilty;* but though the whole story was legally disproved, the calumniators of the queen took no notice of the disproval. One of the vilest of all, Hébert, the editor of a paper entitled "Père Duchesne," who mingled with his ravenous demands of slaughter such foul obscenity as disgusted many even among the Jacobins, reiterated the charge, with every aggravation of ribald insinuation that the most depraved mind could conceive, or the most debased tongue could utter. Nor were verbal insults all that the hapless princes were forced to submit to; measures were openly taken to strip the king even of the scanty defence which the constitution had assigned him; to surround Paris with troops whose disloyalty

* Dr. Moore, ii. 467.

was secured by the very circumstances under which they were brought to their stations; and to debauch the loyalty of the whole army by selecting convicted mutineers for special honours. We have recorded the punishment, not too severe for the offence, with which the Swiss officers had punished those of their own countrymen whose share in the mutiny of Nancy had been the blackest. They were still undergoing their sentence when the Jacobins succeeded in obtaining their pardon, and, not contented with that, invited them to Paris and celebrated a festival in their honour. A wretched strolling player named Collot d'Herbois, whom the friendship of Robespierre was raising to influence in the club, designed the ceremonies. They were escorted in procession through the city; the irons which had been struck from their limbs formed a trophy, inscribed with their names and surmounted by garlands of oak leaves; and, as if that had not been enough, Jourdan, who had been thrown into prison at Avignon for his share in the atrocities committed in that city, but had escaped from his dungeon, marched among them in open defiance of the law. A statue of Liberty raised aloft on a triumphal car, and, for a head-dress, decorated with a blood-red cap which had just been adopted as the most suitable emblem of the goddess, formed a conspicuous object in the centre of the crowd; and behind it came a colossal galley, in derision of the punishment from which the mutineers had been delivered. At the Champ de Mars the procession halted, that the leaders might deliver seditious harangues and sing ribald songs on the steps of the national altar; and from thence it marched into the Assembly, where, in spite of the resistance of many of its most respectable members, who pointed out that

such a compliment was an open inducement to insubordination which must infect the whole army; and of one deputy in particular, M. Gouvion, himself an officer, who reminded his colleagues that his brother had been murdered by these very men, they were introduced into the hall. No deliberative assembly had ever exhibited a more amazing spectacle. The pardoned convicts were followed by a crowd of deserters from other regiments, by gangs of Santerre's ruffians from St. Antoine all armed, and by a multitude of abandoned women from the lowest quarters of the city. The men did not scruple to avow to the assembled legislators of the nation that they had thousands of comrades busily arming for a new insurrection; the women interrupted them with cheers and songs, dancing in furious mirth before the tribunes, and embracing convicts and deputies with equal vehemence: and, before they departed, the president thanked them for their loyalty in the name of the Assembly and the nation.

It was well known that the announcement of an impending insurrection was not an empty threat, and the Jacobins soon began to take precautions to prevent its being resisted. One great obstacle to its success they apprehended might be found in the constitutional guard, the greater part of which was loyal to the king, and whose commander, the Duke de Brissac, was one of his most devoted and most able adherents. At Easter the dauphin had presented the officers with a magnificent cake, one of the ornaments of which was a small white flag taken from among his own toys. No secret had been made of what indeed was too trivial a circumstance for mystery: but even in a child's cake could matter be found for accusation against persons whom those really in power were

determined to destroy. Pétion issued orders to search the officers' quarters; the flag was found, and though scarcely six-inches high, and such as could have been matched in any toy-shop, it was gravely produced to the Assembly as proof of a design formed by the court to massacre the patriots. Chabot, whom the Assembly had immediately released from his arrest on his committal, moved the dissolution of the guard; and though the motion was vigorously opposed by members who did not hesitate to denounce it as one which could only have regicide for its secret object, it was carried. Louis almost resolved to withhold his assent, but even Dumouriez feared to encourage him to do so. He did implore De Brissac to save himself by flight, but the duke refused; he was arrested and sent to Orleans for trial, saying that what grieved him was not his own imprisonment but the thought that he was leaving his king a prisoner in his own palace.

Louis was thus deprived of the means to defend himself against attack. The next step was to provide means of making one on him; and with this view one of the ministers themselves, Servan, on the 4th of June proposed to the Assembly that a fresh force of twenty thousand men should be levied in the departments before the 14th of July, when it was intended to hold another Federation festival, and should be permanently stationed at Paris. The proposal produced great dissensions both in the ministry and among the Jacobins. It had been made without the privity of Dumouriez or La Coste, who instantly expressed their disapproval; Robespierre and his party treated it as a clear attempt on the part of the Girondin section of the club to make themselves masters of both king and Assembly. The national guard too saw in it a threat or an affront to them-

selves, since the proposed force could only be intended either to overbear or else to supersede them; while the bulk of the citizens, who had begun to sigh for the restoration of tranquillity, were terrified at a measure which could only be meant to secure a continuance of disorder. While, therefore, Robespierre and Danton denounced it at the club, the trading classes drew up and presented a petition numerously signed against it to the Assembly. But the divisions on the dismissal of the king's guard had so convinced the constitutionalists of the impossibility of withstanding their opponents that it was carried by a large majority; and when the king announced to the council his resolution to put his veto upon it, Dumouriez himself besought him to retract his decision and to assent to it, and also to the decree against the priests, to which he had hitherto been steadfast in refusing his assent. Louis had never been so hard to persuade: the establishment of a camp he declared could only be intended for the destruction of the constitution; the decree against the priests was incompatible with his religious convictions. Dumouriez held out a hope that he might himself, by management of the details of the levy and the stations of the troops to be raised, disarm that measure of its intended mischief; and, as to the priests, he argued that the decree was but the natural consequence of the former vote imposing the oath on them, to which Louis had assented. The queen was so convinced by his arguments, not of the propriety of sanctioning the two measures but of the impossibility of rejecting them, that she added her entreaties to those of the minister; and at last Louis yielded on the condition

* "Mémoires de Ferrières," xii.

that the general, with La Coste and Duranton, would continue in his service. He dismissed Roland, Clavière, and Servan, substituting for them three men of whom it will never be needful to mention anything more than the names, Vergennes, Mourques, and Naillac. To the last Dumouriez gave up the portfolio of foreign affairs, exchanging it for that of war at the express desire of the king; but the arrangement was the shortest-lived on record, and scarcely lasted a week.

Louis had especial reason to wish to get rid of Roland, who had recently written him a letter full of insolent threats, and had read it to him at the council.* It would be more correct to call Madame Roland the authoress; her eagerness for political power, inflamed by the enjoyment of it, now equalled her thirst for the blood of Louis and his family. She had thrust herself into the private meetings of the ministers, to the great discontent of her husband's colleagues, who complained that when they came to consult him they obtained not his opinion but only a glimpse of his wife's petticoats; and she had conceived an especial antipathy to Dumouriez because he refused either to communicate his views to her or to submit to her dictation. She had drawn up the letter in question, allowing her husband no further share in it than was involved in his signing it; and in it she openly threatened the king with the rage of the people if he forfeited its confidence by refusing his assent to the decrees of the Assembly. "He was exciting its distrust; distrust is not far from hatred; hatred does not hesitate at crime. If the king did

* Even Lamartine condemns the letter, of which he says, "The threat was no less evident than the treachery."—xiii. 16.

not give satisfaction to the Revolution it would be cemented by blood." Such was the language this furious woman dared to compel her husband to hold to his sovereign, while secretly she urged him and his friends to ensure the king's compliance by procuring the assassination of Dumouriez,* the character of whose counsels to Louis she did not suspect, but whose hostility to her projects she had truly divined.

The ministry, which may be called that of Dumouriez, did not, as we have already said, last an entire week. The Girondin orators, urged on by Madame Roland, denounced him with frantic reproaches, as making Cromwell his model, a reproach which they had in some degree disarmed of its weight by applying it previously to Lafayette. He refuted them with argument, and daunted them by his resolution and evident contempt; denouncing the ministers who had been dismissed as men who by their incapacity and complicity with fraudulent dealers had greatly injured the country during their administration; and he severely reproved the Assembly itself for contenting itself with issuing decrees without even considering whether they were executed or were capable of execution. But the quarrel which was thus declared between the Assembly and the general, coupled with the seditious meetings of the populace which, as he learnt, were daily held in the suburbs, increased the agitation of Louis, and made him repent the promise which he had given to sanction the decree against the priests. He abandoned all hope, and derived firmness from his very despair. Expecting immediate death, he was resolved that his last act should not be one which he looked on as subversive of religion; for

* "History of the Girondins," xiii. 18.

the future he determined to brave fortune, and to trust only to the guidance of his conscience. He was still willing to propitiate the Assembly by permitting the levy of the troops which they desired to raise; but he drew up a letter to the president announcing his fixed disapproval of the decree against the priests, and laid it before his three ministers, for their new colleagues had hardly been installed in their offices, requiring one of them to countersign it. Dumouriez was dismayed; the promise to sanction both the decrees had been the sole condition on which they had remained in office. They saw that if the king should persist in his present intention, Roland and his colleagues would be able to represent their dismissal as having been caused by their support of the decrees; that thus an impulse would be given to the most violent section of the Assembly which they should be wholly unable to resist; and they implored Louis to withhold the letter, absolutely refusing to countersign it, and tendering their resignations if he persisted. They all expressed the deepest devotion to him, and affirmed that it was for the sake of the priests themselves, whom his refusal would point out as especial marks for the hatred of the populace, and still more for his own sake and for the sake of his kingly power, it might be of his own life and that of his whole family, that they were so positive and earnest with him not to change the intention which he had expressed only a week before. Louis could only reply that he had done wrong then, that he now repented, and accepted their resignation; they departed. The constitutionalists were in dismay at the loss of a minister who was the only bulwark between them and the Jacobins; they conjured Dumouriez to yield to the king and countersign the veto, promising him not

only their own support in the Assembly but that of Lafayette and his army. Dumouriez had no confidence in their influence or energy, and still less in the ability or good faith of Lafayette;* he rejected their proffered aid, and the next day in a private audience took leave of the king with deep respect and sad forebodings.' He should never, he said, see him again; and for the last time he implored him to sanction the decree against the priests. Many and striking as are the points of resemblance between the histories of the French Revolution and the great English rebellion, there is hardly one more precise than is afforded by the stand made by Charles against the last resolution against the bishops and this resistance of Louis on behalf of the priests, and by the fatal effect which in each case their decision had upon their fortunes. On that one subject Louis continued inflexible. "God," he told his departing minister, "was his witness that he was thinking only of the happiness of France."† Dumouriez did full justice to the honesty and disinterestedness of his patriotism; but warned him, in words which should be ever present to the mind of every statesman who would legislate for or rule a country, that he was responsible to God not only for the purity of his intentions but also for the enlightened exercise of his authority; and once more he predicted the destruction of religion, the massacre of the priests, the loss of the king's crown: his voice failed him when he tried to describe the dangers he foresaw for the king himself and his family. Louis

* "Dumouriez connaissait trop la faiblesse des constitutionnels, la nullité de Lafayette . . . . 'Vous n'êtes que des enfans,' répondit-il; 'vous égarez le roi et la reine; vous les perdez par vos puériles intrigues.'" —De Ferrières, l. xi.

† Mémoires de Dumouriez, and also of Marquis de Ferrières, l. xi.

was moved by his evident sincerity; he shed tears. "I expect death," said he, "and I have already pardoned my enemies. You are going to the army, and have my gratitude and esteem; may you be happier than I am." Dumouriez retired deeply affected. His forebodings were verified almost to the letter. After a few days he quitted Paris for the army; and we have already recorded how, while Louis lived, he seemed to realize likewise the wishes which the king expressed for his success.

He was succeeded by an officer named Lajard, and Mourques was replaced by M. Terrier, both constitutionalists; Lajard being also a personal adherent of Lafayette, a circumstance which did not tend to recommend him to those who now swayed the Assembly. That general, who by this time had become really desirous to save the king, exhibited in the course which he adopted the same mixture of boldness and irresolution that had characterised his conduct ever since the return from Varennes. Neither he nor his army had gained much credit by the result of their military operations: but, as if both were in the highest degree formidable, he now wrote a letter to the Assembly, drawing a true picture of the evils and dangers which were destroying the present and threatening the future prosperity of the country; denouncing the Jacobins as the chief cause of them, and calling on the Assembly to suppress the clubs as the usurpers of a power incompatible alike with the laws of the State and the liberty of the people. He attacked the ministers also both past and present, accusing Servan of incapacity and dishonesty, charges which were true enough; and Dumouriez of having procured the dismissal of him and his colleagues that he might monopolize the confidence of the king, a statement

which was not only founded on a complete misapprehension of the facts, but which was inconsistent with the character he had just given of Servan, which supplied abundant reason for dismissing him. He could hardly have expected to influence a single deputy by a letter of implied threats unsupported by action. Guadet, in the Assembly, compared it to the attempt of Cromwell to dictate to the English Parliament. Robespierre and Danton at the Jacobins described it as an intention to imitate the example of Monk. They had by some means or other learnt that he had at the same time written another letter to the king to exhort him to persist in rejecting both the decrees which were in dispute,* and they demanded that he should be impeached before the High Court of Orleans. The practical effect of his conduct was for a moment to reconcile the rest of the Jacobins with the Girondin section; and united they hastened on the insurrection, which had already been announced, as the most practical reply to it. It was organized with unusual deliberation; Danton, to whom Madame Roland had of late attached herself with great vehemence, presided over the conspirators' meetings, which were attended by Barbaroux, a barrister from the south, who was even higher than he in the lady's favour; and who, a few weeks later, showed that in cold-blooded ferocity he was not much surpassed by Danton himself, by Legendre the butcher; by Chabot, by Marat; by Santerre, by Rotondo the Italian, who had already been detected in an attempt to assassinate the king; and by Pétion, who, if any one could have doubted it before, now showed how fatal a mistake

* "Histoire de la Terreur," par M. Mortimer Ternaux, liv. ii., vol. i., p. 128.

the court had made in favouring his pretensions. There were present, too, some agents of the Duke d'Orleans, who were generally understood to be liberal of their master's gold, in the hope that the result of the coming riot might be the assassination of Louis, and the duke's elevation to the throne. On the night of the 19th the appointed leaders of the different parties of insurgents separated; the watchword, "Destruction to the Palace," was given out, and all Paris waited in anxious terror for the events of the morrow.*

Louis was as well aware as any of the citizens what was in agitation. Once more he prepared for death. On the 19th he wrote to his confessor to desire him to come at once to him. "He had never," he said, "had such need of his consolations. He had done with this world, and his thoughts were now fixed on heaven alone. Great calamities were announced for the morrow, but he felt that he had courage to meet them;"† and, after the holy man had left him, as he gazed on the setting sun he once more gave utterance to his forebodings: "Who can tell," said he, "whether it is not the last that I shall see?" not, indeed, that his fears were for himself, but for his queen and for his children, and for them he knew himself to be defenceless and helpless. There were some who would gladly have aided him, but they were equally powerless. The Duke de Liancourt, who had some title to be listened to by the revolutionary party, since no one had been more zealous than he in forwarding the earliest measures of the first Assembly, pressed earnestly on Pétion that his duty as mayor bound him to call out the national guards, and prevent the in-

* "History of the Girondins," xvi. 3-8.

† Letter of Malouet to Mallet Dupan, quoted by Smyth, Lect. 27.

tended outbreak, but was answered by sarcasms and insults; while Vergniaud, from the tribune of the Assembly itself, dared to deride those who apprehended danger.

Early in the morning of the 20th twenty thousand men, nearly all of whom were armed in some way or other; muskets, pikes, hatchets, crowbars, even spits from the cook-shops, forming part of their equipment; collected in the place where the Bastille had stood. Santerre was already there on horseback, surrounded, like a general, with a staff of subaltern ringleaders; and at his word they formed into three brigades, and marched towards the Rue St. Honoré. Santerre himself was at the head of one; a second was under St. Huruge, who was now more closely than ever connected with D'Orleans; Théroigne de Méricourt, in man's clothes, with a musket on her shoulder, and seated astride on a cannon, led on the third, which as it advanced was swelled by recruits from all the side streets, and by vast companies of the lowest class of women, whose imprecations in ferocity and foulness surpassed even the butality of the men. The ostensible pretext of the assemblage and of the procession was to present petitions to the king and the Assembly on the royal refusal to sanction the decree against the priests, and on the dismissal of Roland and his two colleagues from the ministry. The real object was shown more truthfully by the banners and emblems which the crowd bore aloft. "Beware the lamp-post!" was the inscription on one; "Death to Veto and his wife!" on another. A company of butchers carried a calf's heart on the point of a pike, with the words, "The heart of an aristocrat." A band of crossing-sweepers, or men who professed to be such, though the fineness of their linen was inconsistent with the rags

which were their outward garments, had for their standard a pair of ragged breeches, with the incription, "Tremble, tyrants; here are the Sans Culottes!" a title which the revolutionists of the streets were beginning to adopt. One gang of ruffians carried a model of a guillotine; another a miniature gallows, with the effigy of the queen herself hanging to it. So great was the crowd that it was nearly three in the afternoon when it reached the Assembly, where its approach raised a debate, or the pretence of a debate, on the propriety of admitting petitioners who came in so menacing a guise. M. Rœderer, the chief legal officer of the department of Paris, represented with truth that such a procession, which avowed its purpose of forcing its way to the king, was not only illegal in its avowed object, but was very likely to be led on to acts of violence, even if it had not premeditated them. He was seconded by more than one of the constitutionalists, who declaimed with energy on the necessity of enforcing obedience to the law. But Vergniaud turned all their scruples into ridicule. He defended the admission of the petitioners, in spite of their being armed, by the precedent of the procession of the Swiss mutineers. But in truth the discussion was a mere sham; for, even before he had finished speaking, the leaders of the mob opened the doors, and showed that they were quite strong enough to dispense with any formal permission. And one of them read the document which they called a petition, but which was in fact a short and implacable denunciation of those whom it called the enemies of the people, of whom it demanded that "the land should be purged." The dismissal of Roland and his colleagues, as it asserted, proved that of such enemies the king was the chief; to satisfy his pride and ambition

the blood of patriots was being shed with impunity (the petition did not explain where): and the life of a king was of no more account than that of any private citizen. The High Court of Orleans was almost equally reproached for its slowness in condemning those whom the nation sent to be tried by it, trial being in the eyes of the petitioners synonymous with condemnation. Insolent, however, and ferocious as the petition was, it coincided with the feelings of the Girondins, who were now the masters of the Assembly. At each demand for blood the leaders smiled. And the whole Assembly showed its approval by voting that the petitioners should be allowed to enter with their arms and defile before them. Elated by this sanction, the multitude poured in with even greater uproar than they had raised in the streets. Songs half bloodthirsty and half obscene, gestures indicative some of murder some of debauchery, cries of *Vive la nation* mingled with inarticulate yells, were the sounds; the galley, the guillotine, the queen on the gallows, were the sights which were thought most in character with the legislative assembly of the people which boasted itself the pattern of civilization to Europe. So great was the crowd, that evening approached before the last of the rabble had passed through the hall; and by that time the leading ranks were in front of the Tuilleries.

There were but scanty means of resisting them; the disbanding of the constitutional guard had left the protection of the palace to the national guard, of whom but a few companies were at hand, and with them agents of D'Orleans and the Girondins had been busily tampering all the morning, winning the sympathy and connivance of many. A few remained firm

in their loyalty; but those on whom the royal family could most rely were a band of gentlemen with the veteran Marshal de Noailles at their head, who had repaired to the Tuilleries in the morning to supply to their sovereign such defence as could be found in their devoted fidelity and fearless gallantry; some besides the old marshal, D'Hervilly, who had commanded the cavalry of the constitutional guard, and Acloque, an officer of the national guard, brought military experience to aid their valour, and made such arrangements as seemed practicable to keep the rioters at bay. But the utmost valour of such a handful of men, as at the most they were, and even the more solid resistance of iron-gates and barriers, were unavailing against the thousands who assailed them. With Santerre, St. Huruge, Legendre, and the woman Théroigne, more savage than either, at their head, they began to beat down the railings and gates with sledge-hammers. Presently they were joined by Sergent and Panis, two magistrates of the municipality, belonging to Danton's party, who ordered the sentinels at the gates to open them to the sovereign people. The sentinels fled. The gates were opened or dashed in; the mob seized one of the cannons in the Carrousel, by main force carried it up the stairs of the palace, planted it against the door of the royal apartments, and, while they shouted out their demands that the king should show himself, began to batter the door as they had battered the gates below, and threatened if it did not yield to their hatchets to blow it down with the cannon-shot.

They were exulting in the thought that the king and queen were trembling behind it. They did not yet know them. As since the world began no human sufferings have ever equalled those which during the remainder of their lives tortured that unhappy family,

equally unsurpassed is the sublime heroism with which every member of it endured them. In that protracted agony of many months not one thought of selfish terror blanched the countenance, not one word of fear or abasement passed the lips of a single individual. If any trembled, it was for the welfare and safety of the rest, not for his own; and that safety each was every moment prepared to purchase with his own life-blood. Weak and irresolute as Louis had too often shown himself and was still to show himself in action, when he had but to suffer and endure no one ever confronted his fate with a more serene intrepidity. Marie Antoinette may have been frivolous in her hour of prosperity, may have clung to the prejudices of absolute power with excessive tenacity, may have been somewhat wrong-headed and over-resentful in her judgment of those who had wished and contributed to abridge it; but her heart was as true and noble as any that ever beat in a female bosom. Her only thought was for her husband, her children, and his and their rights; for them, or, if that could not be, with them she was prepared to die; but not to degrade either them or herself by a single concession or submission unworthy of her race. The meek and pious Princess Elizabeth, the sister of the king, no one could reproach with an error even of judgment; but she was nerved to a resolution which seemed foreign to her gentle character by the danger of her brother and his family, and rivalled Marie Antoinette herself in the dauntlessness of her unselfish heroism.

The hatchets beat down the outer door; as it fell, the king came forth from the room behind, and with unruffled countenance accosted the ruffians who were pouring through it. The princess was by his side. He had charged those around him to keep back the

queen; and she, knowing how special an object of the popular hatred and fury she was, with a fortitude beyond that which defies death kept out of sight lest she should add to his danger. For a moment the mob, respecting in spite of themselves the calm courage with which they were confronted, had paused in their onset; but they were pushed on from behind, and pikes were levelled and blows aimed at both king and princess, whom they mistook for the queen. One of those around him struck down the man who first presumed to lift his hand against the king. Another cried out "Spare the princess." She turned to her preserver almost reproachfully: "Why did you undeceive them? It might have saved the queen." But in a minute or two Acloque, with some grenadiers of the national guard who were still faithful, hastened up by a back stairs to defend their sovereign; and M. de Bougainville, one of Noailles' comrades, drew the king back into a recess formed by a window, raised a rampart of benches in front of him, and one more trustworthy still of the bodies of himself, D'Hervilly, Acloque, and half-a-dozen of the boldest grenadiers. They would gladly have charged their assailants, but were restrained by Louis himself: "Put up your swords," said he; "this crowd is excited rather than wicked," and he addressed those who had entered with words of condescending conciliation. They replied with threats and imprecations: "Give us back the ministers, or die: down with the veto: death to the Austrian;" and their mere weight pressed back the group of royal champions till many of them were again within reach of the king. So furious were they, and so great was the uproar, that a report reached the mass of the insurgents, who had been unable to penetrate beyond the garden, that Louis had

been assassinated, and they mingled cries of triumph with shouts in honour of D'Orleans as their new king, and demanded that they should throw them down the heads of the king and queen from the windows; but no actual personal injury was on that day inflicted on Louis, though he owed his safety even more to his own calmness than to the devotion of his guards. One ruffian threatened him with instant death if he did not at once grant every demand contained in the petition. The king replied, as composedly as if he had been on his throne at Versailles, that the present was not the time for making such a demand, nor was this the way to make it. The dignity of the answer seemed to imply a contempt for the threateners; they grew more uproarious. "Fear not, sire," said one of the grenadiers, "we are surrounding you." The king took the man's hand and placed it on his heart, which beat more calmly than his own. "Judge, yourself," said he, "if I fear." Legendre, the butcher, raised his pike as he reproached him as a traitor and the enemy of his country. "I am not and never have been aught but the sincerest friend of all my people," was the gentle but fearless answer. "If it be so, put on this red cap," and the butcher thrust one into his hand, prepared, if he hesitated to accept it, to plunge his weapon into his breast. The king put it on, and so little regarded it, that he did not afterwards remember to remove it, as he would have wished to do, and as he repented that he had not done, thinking that his conduct in suffering it to

* This, at least, was the king's own belief. The next day he told Bertrand de Moleville, "Je suis convaincu que si j'avais hésité à consentir qu'il (le bonnet rouge) fût mis sur ma tête, l'homme ivre qui me le présentait, m'eût enfoncé sa pique dans l'estomac."—Bertrand de Moleville, "Mémoires Particulières," c. 22.

remain bore too strong a resemblance to fear or to an unworthy compromise of his dignity.

Presently Marie Antoinette also came forward. At first, from motives which have been mentioned, she had kept in a back-room; but each fresh explosion of fury on the part of the mob increased her unwillingness to continue there; it was her duty, she thought, to stand by the king, to die with him; to keep aloof from him in his danger was infamy. The officers who were with her represented that his danger would be increased by his efforts to save her if he should see her in still greater danger. But after a time, those who had forced their way to the king began to shout out her name and to demand her presence so vociferously that even her friends admitted that it would be best for her to go among them. She threw open the door, leading forward her children, from whom she refused to part; and, accompanied by Madame de Lamballe, Madame de Tourzel, and the rest of her ladies, the most timid of whom seemed inspired by her courage, she took her place by the side of her husband, and with head erect, and colour heightened by the sight of her enemies, faced them disdainfully. As lions in their hunger have recoiled before a man who has looked them steadily in the face, so did even these ruffians quail before their pure and high-minded queen. M. Lajard, as she entered, had drawn a table in front of her to screen her from their advance. One fellow had insisted on her putting the red cap on the dauphin's head, and, as she saw the king already wearing it, she consented; but it was too large, and fell over the child's face, almost stifling him with its thickness. Santerre himself pushed forward, took it off, and leaning his hands on the table, which shook beneath his vehemence, addressed her with what he meant for

courtesy: "Princess," said he, "do not fear; the French people do not wish to slay you. I promise you this in their name." Marie Antoinette had long before declared that her heart had become French; it was too much so to allow to such a man his claim to be spokesman of the nation. "It is not by such as you," she replied, "that I judge of the French people, but by brave men like these," and she pointed to the gentlemen who had come to her defence, and to the faithful grenadiers. The well-timed compliment roused them to still greater enthusiasm; but already the danger was passing away.

The Assembly had seen with indifference the mob depart to attack the palace, and had proceeded with its ordinary business as if nothing were likely to happen which could call for its interference. But when the uproar within the palace became audible in the hall, Dumas and others quitted it to see what was taking place, and, returning, reported the danger in which the king was. Dumas gave such offence by the boldness of his language that he himself was threatened by Chabot and his brother Jacobins; but he refused to be silenced. Deputations of the members were sent to take measures for the king's safety; and then, at last, Pétion, who had carefully kept aloof while there was a chance that the king might be murdered, now that he could no longer hope for such a consummation, repaired to the palace and presented himself before him. To him he declared that he had only just become apprized of his situation. To the Assembly, later in the evening, he boasted that he himself had organized the riot. They seemed to believe him, for they voted him what were called the honours of the sitting. But Louis would not condescend to feign trust in him: "It was extraordinary,"

he replied, "that Pétion should not have known before what had already lasted so long." Even he could not but be abashed before the king's indignation. But he soon recovered himself, and with unsurpassed effrontery turned and thanked the crowd for the moderation and dignity with which they had exercised the right of petition, and bade them "finish the day in similar conformity to the law," and retire to their homes. They obeyed. The first arrival of the deputies had convinced the leaders that they could not succeed in their purpose now. Santerre, whose softer mood, such as it had been, had soon passed away, muttered with a deep oath that they had missed their blow, but must try it again hereafter. For the present he led off his men, the palace and the gardens were restored to quiet, though the traces of the assault to which they had been exposed could not easily be effaced; and Louis and his family were left in tranquillity to marvel at, and thank God for their escape; but to forebode also that similar trials were in store for them, which could not all have so comparatively innocent a termination.*

Louis had no doubt that the insurrection had had its rise in a deliberate intention to assassinate him; and there can be but little doubt that he judged correctly. The queen, whose anxiety for him far exceeded his own, agreed with him so fully that she occupied herself at once in quilting him a waistcoat of thickness sufficient to resist dagger or pistol ball; though the watch that was set upon them was so incessant that many days elapsed before an opportunity could be found for him to try it. She herself was equally menaced, perhaps more than the king; for very few

* Memoirs of Dumas, i. 353.

weeks had elapsed before one man, who had been employed by Santerre to assassinate her, was arrested, with a dagger concealed under his clothes;* and a few days afterwards another was seized who had had no instigator beyond the knowledge that there were men to whom his crime would be acceptable, of sufficient authority to secure him impunity and reward.† And there was strong reason to suspect that some of the purveyors of food to the royal kitchen had been tempted to mix poison with their goods. But though thus living henceforth in daily apprehension of death, Louis conducted himself with unusual firmness and dignity; as if he were as firmly seated on his throne as he had seemed to be three years before. On the 21st he sent a message to the Assembly conveying a notification in general terms of the events that had taken place; thanking the deputies for the zeal they had shown in his behalf by repairing to the palace; desiring them to take the steps necessary to investigate the causes of the riot, and to prevent its recurrence; and declaring that he himself should continue to act as he judged best for the welfare of the country. And he issued a proclamation‡ to the nation announcing the same intention: intimating at the same time his knowledge that there were men who were seeking to destroy both himself and the monarchy, but declaring that under every circumstance he would continue, as became his place, to set every other authority in the kingdom an example of adherence to the constitution, and of that firmness and courage which alone could save it.

On the people at large the example which he thus afforded, coupled with the unparalleled insults to him

* Bertrand de Moleville, c. 24.

† Madame de Campan, c. 20.

‡ Dumas, i. 357, who gives both letter and proclamation at length.

which had given occasion for it, produced a great effect. The authorities of the department of the Somme presented him an address conveying the thanks of the whole department for the noble stand he had made against insurrection, and offering instantly to send up every battalion of their national guards to Paris to prevent a repetition of it; other departments, and many of the great cities, Lyons and Rouen among the foremost, forwarded similar petitions. Twenty thousand citizens of Paris in a single day signed another; and the council of the metropolis presented him one, requesting that he would at once suspend Pétion and Manuel, the attorney of the muncipality, from their offices. Louis was especially offended with Pétion, who had had the audacity to visit him on the 21st, not to apologize for the conduct of the mob, but to eulogize its moderation and good conduct. He had indignantly ordered him to be silent, and now willingly consented to suspend him. But the Assembly were resolved to show how little they sympathized with the people whom they professed to represent. They had pretended to investigate the cause of the insurrection; a matter not difficult to ascertain, since those who had devised it came openly to the bar and boasted of their act; but these self-avowed criminals became objects of compliments not of punishment. They voted the honours of the sitting to the most audacious;* and, though they had no such power given them by the constitution, they took upon themselves to annul the king's decision with respect to Pétion, and replaced that unworthy magistrate in the post which he had disgraced.

* Letter of Malouet to Mallet Dupan, quoted from MS. by Smyth, Lecture 28; Dr. Moore's Journal, ii. 202-225.

Very different were the feelings with which the army on the Eastern frontier heard of these transactions. Though, as we have seen, at one time the revolutionary spirit had infected the troops in no moderate degree, they were evidently not prepared for such direct attacks not only on the king's authority but on his person. Perhaps the fact of their being now engaged in hostilities in obedience to a declaration of war announced by the king himself, had reawakened the loyalty of those who before had wavered. At all events they viewed the events of the 20th with deep and universal indignation, and many battalions proposed to march on Paris and at once put down the authors of that traitorous attempt. Lafayette shared their indignation; whatever his opinions and conduct had been a year before, he now saw clearly that events had gone beyond him; and there can be no doubt that he wished to undo much that he had done, and that he was now sincerely desirous not only to protect the king's person but to preserve him the authority with which he was still nominally invested. If he had contributed, as cannot be denied, to pull him down, he was honestly solicitous now to prevent him from falling lower. Yet in seeking to achieve this desirable end, he only showed the incurable feebleness of his mind, his ineradicable propensity for half measures. He might have acted vigorously, and (we may almost say with certainty) usefully. He limited himself to threatening vehemently, and brought ridicule and discomfiture on himself, and rather injured than assisted those whom he desired to serve. He might have led his army, who would gladly have followed him, to Paris, and, availing himself of the feelings which actuated all the respectable portion of the citizens, have crushed the Jacobins and Girondins,

and in all likelihood have firmly established the king in the exercise of all the authority vested in him by the constitution, or even, if he had thought fit, have compelled the Assembly to enlarge that authority. His enemies had accused him of wishing to copy Cromwell. His friends had boasted that he would emulate the services of Monk. If he showed that he had not the boldness of the one, he also proved himself equally devoid of the subtle firmness and resolute wariness of the other. If subsequently he had in any respect to congratulate himself on the result of his conduct, it was that, like the stork, after he had thrust his head into the wolf's throat, he had been allowed to withdraw it in safety.

He quitted his army, and, attended by a single aide-de-camp, hastened to Paris, where on the morning of the 28th he presented himself at the bar of the Assembly. His friends had taken some pains to secure him a favorable hearing. The constitutionalist party mustered in full force, and they had packed the galleries;* for by this time the attendance on the debates which had originated in the enthusiastic curiosity of the citizens, had degenerated into a trade; and the frequenters of the galleries were a rabble who

* How completely organized the system was may be seen in Bertrand de Moleville's memoirs. He proposed to the king, as an important part of the scheme for re-establishing his authority, to overawe the discussions by taking the band of claqueurs into his pay for a given time. He reckoned that 262 trustworthy and strong men (hommes surs et vigoureux) would be sufficient to fill the front row of the galleries all round the hall, and he gave in, as an estimate of the expense: For the chief, who was to regulate all their cheers or hisses, 50 francs a day; for a lieutenant, 25 francs; for 10 adjutants, each commanding a subdivision of 25 men, 10 francs, for the 250 rank and file, 50 sous a day; in all, 800 francs a day. And he reckoned that a single week would be sufficient for them to make a great impression on the general tone of the Assembly.—"Mém. Partic." c. 23, vol. ii. 57.

made a livelihood by applauding or hooting down the different speakers, according to the views of those who paid them. The Jacobins had been their principal employers, though the ministers themselves had not always disdained them. And on this occasion the Duke de Liancourt, whose guest Lafayette was, was beforehand with them. Lafayette's language was severe, reproachful, and fearless. He declared that he came as the authorized spokesman of the whole army, from every battalion and every rank of which he had received addresses expressing their detestation of the factions which had been the authors of the late outrage on the palace. The constitution, the Assembly, and the king, must all alike be protected from a repetition of such attacks. And he required the Assembly to order the authors of those outrages to be at once prosecuted for high treason. The army had a right to be assured that no injury should happen to the constitution from within while they were exposing their lives to defend it against enemies from without.

The roof rung with the applauses from the galleries; and in the body of the hall many of the deputies themselves who did not belong to his party cheered him with manifest sincerity; so obvious to all but the most desperate was the truth of his words, and the danger to every class if Santerre and his fellow-ruffians should become masters of the State. But never was more clearly shown the folly of holding high, imperious, and especially threatening language, without being prepared instantly to follow it up by resolute acts. Had the speaker come with an army at his back it can hardly be doubted that he would have met with entire success; he would have had even a majority of the Assembly itself in his favour. But

he was known to be alone, and his speech was therefore in effect merely a challenge to speakers more practised and eloquent than himself. Guadet took it up. He saw the necessity for instantly doing away with the effect of the general's denunciations; and with consummate address turned the tables on him: not stopping to discuss the character or possible consequences of the attack on the king, of which in fact he himself had been one of the chief instigators, but openly and with great plausibility charging Lafayette himself with a gross violation of the law in quitting the army with which he had been commissioned to serve. He said when he first heard of Lafayette's arrival in Paris his joy was extreme: the enemies of the country must have been vanquished. He found to his astonishment that they were still as powerful as ever; and therefore he declared that Lafayette himself had violated the constitution in quitting his post. He must produce his leave of absence from the proper minister. And Guadet concluded a most powerful harangue by moving for a commission to investigate the propriety or the danger to the State of allowing generals the right of petitioning.* He was strenuously seconded by Vergniaud, who openly threatened Lafayette with impeachment. The general was not a practised debater to be ready with a rejoinder. Indeed, he had disarmed himself of the only effectual reply when he had left behind his soldiers, who would have maintained his right to violate the constitution by proving his power to do so. As it was, that very adherence to the constitution which he had required the Assembly to make the rule of their conduct, crippled and silenced him; for that it was an infringe-

* Bertrand de Moleville, c. 24, vol. ii. p. 85; Dumas, i. 369.

ment of strict law for him to leave his post could not be denied. He made no attempt to counteract the arguments of the two Girondins, but stood like one petrified at their violence. His discomfiture was manifest; and had not Ramond, the ablest speaker on the Right, interposed, Guadet was preparing to move his arrest on the spot, with a view to his immediate impeachment. Ramond was especially connected with Lafayette, having at one time been his secretary, and he now by a well-timed and earnest panegyric on his old master's exertions in the cause of liberty neutralized the effect of Guadet's denunciations; and, as an amendment to his motion, proposed that the demands made by the general should be referred to a committee, who should be instructed to investigate the whole transaction of which he complained. The deputies of the centre supported him unanimously, in spite of all the efforts of the Girondins and Jacobins. The amendment was carried by a large majority. Lafayette's partisans, encouraged by this result, demanded and obtained for him the honours of the sitting. And when he quitted the Assembly he was conducted by several battalions of the national guard, and by a great concourse of the peaceful citizens, with acclamations to his hotel.

Even now the victory was within his reach if he had had resolution to seize it, and skill to avail himself of the feeling thus manifested in his favour while the terror with which the events of the 20th had impressed the citizens was still fresh in their minds. Unhappily for all parties, as the ultimate result proved, as unhappily for the Girondins themselves as for any others, they were more resolute than he. And his next step showed more clearly than ever his deficiency in the vigour necessary for one who would be a party

leader in such times. There had been preluding enough; but he conceived that the moderate party among the citizens, who in their hearts were well affected to the constitution, but allowed themselves to be overborne by the violence of a few, would be encouraged by a more formal display of the attachment of the troops to himself, especially if the king also were to be identified with him. He proposed, therefore, that Louis should the next morning review Acloque's division of the national guard, and that he himself should afterwards harangue them on the duty they owed to the king and constitution. The Girondins had as little doubt as he of the result of such an appeal to the soldiers; and, as they felt it would be fatal to their projects, they resolved to prevent it. Pétion, as mayor, disregarding his suspension, which had not yet been taken off, prohibited the review; and Lafayette, instead of holding it in defiance of him, submitted to the prohibition. After such an exhibition of weakness the soldiers themselves had no heart to support him. On the 29th ten thousand men would have stood in their ranks to listen to him. When he summoned them to meet him in the Champs Elysées the next day, with the half-avowed intention of leading them to suppress the Jacobin Club, scarcely thirty attended. Pétion began to think he could venture to order his arrest;* and even the knowledge of his personal danger (for he had friends who gave him notice of what was in agitation) could not make him resolve on instant and decisive action. He quitted Paris and rejoined the army, where he was once more in safety; but his visit, however well intentioned, had been prejudicial to the king's cause,

* Toulongeon, i. 281, seq.

adding to the irritation of his enemies, and making more public the irresolution of and the divisions existing among his friends.

How completely this had been its effect was seen in the course of the next fortnight. The festival of the Federation, at which the king had promised to be present, was at hand; and the expectation that it would furnish a pretext or opening for further riots kept all parties in a state of excitement. One Jacobin, devoted to the success of his party, and judging that such a state of the public mind was of all things the most detrimental to the cause of royalty, conceived a plan for aggravating it which affords a singular specimen of the frenzy to which political enthusiasm can inflame the mind. A man of whom little else is known, but that he was a member of the Assembly, and that his name was Grangeneuve, suggested to Chabot that the people was not yet sufficiently exasperated against the court, nor could be without bloodshed. And to work it up to the proper pitch, he offered himself as the victim; proposing that very night to repair to one of the dark streets by the Louvre, where Chabot should meet him and stab him to the heart. When his body should be found the next day, Chabot should accuse the court of the murder, and "the vengeance of the people should do the rest." Chabot was highly gratified at the prospect of first murdering his friend and then destroying a whole body of innocent men by a false accusation. He promised his co-operation; and it is not very clear how so admirably devised a scheme failed. It was owing to no faltering on the part of Grangeneuve, who went home, made his will, and at the appointed time and place came to be killed like a good citizen; but no one was there to despatch him;

and it seems not to have occurred to him to stab himself.* He continued to live; and must soon have seen that his assassination or any other artificial increase of the prevailing disquietude would have been superfluous. The minds of the whole populace of Paris, including the Assembly, were in a state of fluctuation which was perhaps more dangerous than settled discontent. Lajard and Terrier were so convinced that their presence in the ministry inflamed the feeling against the king, that they resigned; to the great grief of the king, who felt that, short as had been the period of their official existence, they had shown zeal and ability in his service, and firm attachment to his person. And at such a time he had great difficulty in finding any one to take their places whom it would not be madness to trust.† The Assembly seemed as perplexed as himself. One day, on a pretence oddly made up of the condition of the capital and of the movements of the Austrian army, which was in a state of complete inaction, it declared the country in danger; the next day, under a sudden impulse of philanthropy and loyalty, the deputies, excited partly by a Madame Gouges, a lady who greatly cultivated the society of wits and politicians, and who took upon herself to write a letter to exhort the Assembly to unanimity, and partly by Lamourette, Bishop of Lyons, who addressed them in a pathetic speech having the same object, bound themselves for the future to have but one heart and

* "History of the Girondins," xix. 6; "Mémoires de Ferrières," liv. xii.

† The names of the new ministry, which is all that need be recorded, were Bigot, as Foreign Secretary; Dubouchage, Minister of the Marine; Dubancourt, for War; Champion, for the Interior; Leroux Delaville, for Finance. De Joly, who had succeeded Duranton as Minister of Justice, retained his office.

one political sentiment, that of adherence to the constitution. Royalists, Constitutionalists, and Jacobins embraced in sudden transport; and the Assembly sent a respectful message to the king, entreating his presence to ratify so complete a reconciliation of all parties. He came at once. With his disposition, it was not strange that he yielded to the illusion of the spectacle which he beheld. He shed tears of joy, declared the complete harmony of his sentiments with theirs, and predicted that their union would save France. The Assembly escorted him back with cheers to the Tuilleries. And at the evening sitting of the very same day, after a stormy debate, which was a singular commentary on their oath of unanimity in the morning, they set the king at defiance by a pointed insult, annulling some decrees of the department of Paris to which he had assented, and passing a vote of confidence in Pétion as mayor.

On the feast of the Federation, which took place the next day, July 14, Pétion was the hero. With every cheer for the nation his name was mingled; while the voices were but few which dared to pronounce the name of the king. Many believed that it would be the occasion of a fresh attempt to assassinate him; but Louis himself did not share that opinion. He already divined that the purpose of his enemies was to put him to death in a more formal manner; and at times the queen shared his apprehensions;* though at others, with an elasticity of spirit, and a sanguine confidence,† the fruit of her indomitable courage,

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* Madame de Campan, c. xx.

* Bertrand de Moleville, who was constantly astonished by her sanguine temperament, attributed no small part of her subsequent misfortunes to it. "Cette princesse infortunée, accablée sous le poids du malheur, le croyait toujours à son comble, et se faisait illusion sur les nouveaux dangers qui

which as yet nothing could permanently subdue, she still looked forward to the German armies effecting his deliverance, and enabling him to resume his authority with credit. Lafayette, on the other hand, was strongly impressed with a conviction that the king's life would be attempted; and undismayed, and also rendered wiser by his recent failure, proposed, in concert with Marshal Luckner, who had agreed to join him, to bring up a battalion of picked men, to escort the king to the Champ de Mars; and judging that, even should the danger of that day be averted, the king could never be considered permanently safe while he remained in Paris, he urged that on the 15th the king, still under the same protection, should visit the Assembly, announce his intention of quitting the capital for Compiègne, and should instantly set out for that town, to which other divisions of the army would have been brought up, sufficient to set all his enemies at defiance.* Louis himself by this time seems to have been convinced that the general was acting towards him with good faith, but he doubted his ability to carry out what he proposed; while the queen distrusted his loyalty even more than his capacity. She believed him, as she expressed herself, still to have his head full of republican notions which he had brought with him from America; and though she did not deny that he might probably now be sincere in his desire to save the life of Louis, she thought him in his heart as unfriendly to the royal authority as ever. It cannot

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la menaçaient. C'est à cette sécurité ou à cette imprévoyance funeste qu'il faut principalement attribuer son irrésolution ou sa répugnance pour les mesures les plus essentielles à sa sureté et à celle du roi."—"Mém. Partic.," c. 22.

* Ib., c. 24.

be said that her distrust was unnatural. Even if she could have forgotten his apparent connivance with the mob which stormed Versailles, the ignominious treatment which they had experienced at his hands when only the year before he dragged the king and herself as prisoners back from Varennes, and the insulting captivity to which he had afterwards subjected them, were fresh in her mind. Nor could he complain if they interpreted his irresolute conduct a month afterwards as proceeding from any cause but a desire to keep terms with their deadliest enemies. Even his recent exertions in their favour had been so unsuccessful, when he notoriously had the means to ensure success, as to justify suspicions of his lukewarmness.* Louis, however, was probably not influenced so much by the queen's doubts as by his own when he rejected Lafayette's proposal: he had some scruple about leaving Paris at all, lest it might be said that he was violating the understanding on which he had accepted the constitution; he had a still greater scruple at going towards the Flemish frontier, lest it should seem that he was desirous to

* If we are to believe Lamartine, Lafayette was even now playing a double game. With his peculiar views, he does not intend it for a reproach; but his words are (I quote the English translation), "Lafayette himself did not disguise his ambition for a protectorate under Louis XVI. At the very moment when he seemed devoted to the preservation of the king he wrote thus to his confidant, La Colombe: 'In the matter of liberty I do not trust myself to the king or any other person; and if he were to assume the sovereign I would fight against him, as I did in '89.'" —"History of Girondins," xvii. 7. As Lamartine does not give the date, it is charitable to hope that he is not quite correct as to the time when he supposes this letter to have been written. If he be correct, and if he wrote thus to one correspondent at nearly the same time that he wrote the letter to Lally, date July 8, 1792, quoted by De Moleville, it would stamp his conduct with a character of unsurpassed hypocrisy and baseness. If he wrote thus at any period of this year it argues such instability of purpose that the wonder would be not that he was not trusted, but that he should for a moment have expected any one to trust him.

place himself within reach of the Austrian army. With these feelings, at the same time that he expressed great confidence in the sincerity of Lafayette's wish to serve him, he deferred availing himself of his services for the present, but exhorted him so to act as to discourage faction, and to cherish a good feeling among the troops, as what might hereafter enable him to be of effectual service.

Lafayette's, however, was not the only plan which had been suggested for the king's escape from what all his adherents felt to be captivity. Bertrand, who, though no longer his minister, retained his undiminished confidence, had immediately after the outrages of the 20th of June besought him to place himself in safety by quitting Paris, and had found a place admirably suited for a temporary retreat, the castle of Gaillon in Normandy, the people of which province were almost universally loyal. It was within the twenty leagues from Paris which the Assembly had fixed as the furthest limit of his journeys; while yet, in case of the worst, it was within easy distance of the coast. M. Lefort, a distinguished officer, of whose devotion to the royal cause no doubt could be entertained, after a careful military examination, had pronounced it to be thoroughly defensible; and with the advice of other prudent friends, and taking warning from the accidents which had led to the failure of the attempt to reach Montmédy, Bertrand had sketched out a plan for quitting Paris, and traversing the Rouen road, which could excite no suspicion, and which was to be carried out by men of such proved loyalty, courage, and presence of mind as D'Hervilly and Clermont Tonnerre: while, lest there should be any difficulty in providing funds for the expedition, the Duke de Châtelet offered to furnish a million of livres, which

he had for some time kept in reserve for the king's service, if he should need them; and the Duke de Liancourt placed his whole estate at his majesty's disposal, with the reservation of no more than a hundred a year for his own purposes. It is painful to have to relate that this princely self-devotion of De Liancourt contributed as much as any other circumstance to disincline the queen to the plan. The one point in which, during these sad trials, she failed in magnanimity, was in inability to forgive those who at any time, or by any act, or even word, had furthered the attacks which had been made on her husband's power. She dated the success of all the measures of the revolutionary party to the step taken by the king in visiting the Assembly after the capture of the Bastille, which she attributed to the advice and influence of De Liancourt;* and he was notoriously one of the constitutional party, which she still looked on with greater disfavour than even the Girondins or Jacobins. Those she could despise. They were mostly low-born; they were mostly corrupt; but contempt, especially in a French court, could not be entertained for the nobles who did not seek to curtail the absolute power of the crown till they had shown a willingness to surrender their own privileges which had had a still greater share in awakening the cry for reform. If they proposed to exact a constitution from the king, they themselves also were to be, in many points, losers by the change. And she did them great injustice in identifying them all with Lafayette; since there were very few indeed of the constitutionalists who would have desired such limitations of the royal authority as he promoted, or at least coun-

* Bertrand de Moleville, "Mém. Partic.," vol. ii. c. 27; esp. pp. 132-134.

tenanced; and probably not one who would have behaved to the royal family after their return from Varennes as he treated them.* De Liancourt, at all events, was giving the most magnificent proofs of his present devotion to the king; but his willingness to sacrifice his all in his service could not efface from the mind of the queen the recollection of the advice which he had formerly given, and to which she had attributed the most fatal consequences. "M. Bertrand," she said, "forgets that he is putting us in the power of the constitutionalists;"† and on the 6th of August he was informed that the idea of flight was abandoned, or at least deferred "till the last extremity."

Bertrand was almost beside himself with disappointment and despair. In his eyes the last extremity had arrived already. Ever since the 20th of June there had been a succession of riots and tumults which in any ordinary time would have been looked upon as fraught with danger to the State; and a fresh insurrection on a far larger scale than the last had already been announced for the 10th of August. Vergniaud and the other Girondin leaders had had the insolence to write a formal letter to the king threatening him with it; and warning him that his deposition would be the most merciful consequence which he could anticipate, unless he at once restored Roland and his companions to the ministry.‡ And it was well known that a band of ruffians had been brought up from the south to ensure its being conducted with all the bloodthirsty fury that malignity or cruelty could desire

* Count Lally did not scruple to condemn Lafayette's conduct and original principles, but contended that he had renounced them.—Bertrand de Moleville, "Mém. Partic.," vol. ii. c. 27, p. 82.

† Ib. p. 132. ‡ Ib. 112.

or devise. Bertrand thought that some one must have given the king advice intentionally treacherous. But he subsequently learnt that there had been another motive for the new decision. Louis was trusting partly to the strength of the German armies, which, as he reckoned, would within a very few days be able to force their way to the gates of Paris; and equally, if not more, to the infamy of his enemies. He was bribing Danton, Pétion, and Santerre; and the two latter had undertaken, for a million of francs, to stop the projected insurrection. The money was paid to Pétion himself; but, in the belief of Bertrand, his object was only to lull the king into a false security. That the king should for a moment have trusted such a man, is one of the most incomprehensible instances of weakness and blindness which perplex the historian of these times. It was but a day or two before that Pétion, as mayor, had presented to the Assembly a formal petition from all the sections of the capital for the deposition of the king and the convocation of a National Convention to establish a new form of government; and it was plain that he was far more deeply pledged to the populace and to the Jacobins, both by his political sentiments and by his fears, than he could be to the king by any sum of money. But Louis not only caught at straws, as drowning men proverbially do, but even to the last he believed in their solidity. More incredible still, if it were not true, is the fact that even four days later, after the royal family had been dragged from the Tuilleries to take refuge in the Assembly, while on one side the noise of the cannon employed against their palace and its defenders, and on the other the uproar of deputy after deputy rising to denounce her, and to demand the dethronement of the king, was sounding in her ears, Marie

Antoinette could still believe that the tide was about to turn in their favour, and exult that they had not fled.* .

It was a more creditable confidence than reliance on foreign armies, or on notorious traitors and enemies, since it was at least placing trust in men who deserved to be trusted, had not the 20th of June shown their strength to be unequal to their devotion, if the king and queen relied also on the valour and fidelity of those royalists who, disdaining the example of the emigrants, still stood by them. On the 5th of August, the very last Sunday which Louis was ever to behold as the acknowledged sovereign of the land, his levée was thronged with a more than usually numerous and brilliant company; though the gaiety properly belonging to such a scene was on this occasion clouded over by the anxiety for their royal master and mistress, which sobered every one's demeanour and spread gloom over every countenance. The very danger with which such an attendance at the palace could not fail to be attended, was an additional assurance of the unflinching loyalty of those who incurred it; and it was not strange that the present rarity of such fidelity should make it more highly appreciated, and estimated at a value which its practical usefulness to those towards whom it was displayed must fail to realize.

Surely now more than ever must king and queen have lamented the obstinate wrong-headedness and disobedience of the emigrants. A fourth part of those

* "La reine . . . . se tournant vers M. d'Hervilly, qui était auprès d'elle, lui dit avec l'air de la plus parfaite sécurité: 'Eh bien, M. d'Hervilly, n'avons-nous pas bien fait de ne pas partir?' 'Je souhaite de tout mon cœur, madame, que votre majesté puisse me faire la même question dans six mois d'ici,' répondit M. d'Hervilly."—"Mém. de Bertrand de Moleville," v. 27.

who were now at Coblentz, by their avowed sympathy with the invaders of the land furnishing a constant topic to all who desired to revile the crown, if they had been in Paris would have sufficed to make the most violent of the Girondins pause before, in spite of their announcements, they committed themselves to the promised insurrection; for they too had their discouragements. On the 8th the Assembly rejected, by a majority of more than two to one, the motion for the impeachment of Lafayette; and when the populace fell upon those who had voted against it as they quitted the Assembly, the national guard came to their rescue, and inflicted severe chastisement on the foremost of the rioters. The forces, too, which they found at their disposal were far weaker in number than they had anticipated. Barbaroux had promised Madame Roland to bring up from Marseilles and the adjacent districts fifteen hundred men who should be capable of any atrocity. He collected a band of such a character as he had promised; but though he could not exaggerate their savage wickedness, he greatly over-estimated their numbers: though he ransacked galleys, gaols, and every asylum of crime, five hundred* was the utmost amount of their force. Santerre undertook to collect forty thousand Fédérés from other departments to co-operate with them. Those who obeyed his invitation were but two or three hundred. It was plain that, as before, the conspirators must trust to the mob of the capital; to the success of D'Orleans' agents in bribing the national guard; and to the maxim

* Lamartine stands almost alone in affirming that they did amount to 1500. The number mentioned in the text is that given by the generality of writers of the time: and by the latest writer on the subject, M. Mortimer Ternaux, "La Terreur," ii. 143. Dr. Moore, however, calls them from twelve to fourteen hundred.

which Danton, betraying Louis while taking his money, was vociferous and unwearied in impressing on them; "Audacity; once more, audacity; always audacity."

Santerre, Legendre, and St. Huruge were not likely to want audacity; but among their fellow-conspirators some combined with it a high degree of craft. They had the skill even to diminish the numbers of those who might be inclined to resist them, by carrying through the Assembly a vote for the removal of three regiments of the line which were quartered in Paris. They included in their resolution the Swiss guards also; but that part of it they were forced to withdraw, since the treaty with Switzerland expressly secured the republic the honour of furnishing a regiment for their honorable service. At the same time they broke up the staff of the national guard; cashiered the finest companies of that force, the mounted soldiers and the grenadiers, on the plea that such distinctions were incompatible with equality; and filled up the vacancies with the refuse of the city, many of whom were secret agents by whose means they hoped to spread disaffection among the rest of the force. As the day approached, the leaders, Danton, Marat, Camille Desmoulins, and the Girondin orators of the Assembly, held incessant meetings to settle the details of the insurrection, which were made known without the least affectation of secrecy. Robespierre kept aloof from them. He was devoid of personal courage, and probably doubted whether they would succeed; while, if they should, he had that confidence in his dominion over the Jacobin Club that he felt sure that he should be able to appropriate the fruits of their success without having contributed to it. The leaders were not as completely

agreed on the object of their intended outbreak as on its arrangements. Some wished for the slaughter of Louis and all his family; some were willing to content themselves with his dethronement; and of these again some proposed to proclaim the dauphin king, with D'Orleans, or some one of their own body, it might be Pétion, it might be Robespierre, for regent during his infancy; and some hoped to establish a pure republic. The conclusion to which all eventually came seems to have been at all events to overthrow the king by death, or deposition and imprisonment, as the events of the day might determine; and then to deliberate anew on the future form of the government.

The unhappy king was as well aware as any one what was in contemplation. Madame de Staël has affirmed that there never can be a conspiracy, properly so called, in Paris, and that if there could it would be superfluous, since every one at all times follows the majority, and no one ever keeps a secret; but on this occasion concealment had been ostentatiously avoided, and Louis and his adherents so far profited by the warning given them as to make the best arrangements in their power to resist the attack with which they were threatened. It was an apparently encouraging circumstance that the command of the national guard had fallen by rotation to an officer named Mandat, who had formerly held a commission in the French guards. In politics he belonged to the constitutionalist rather than to the royalist party, but in the present posture of affairs he was entirely devoted to the king; and his skill, personal courage, presence of mind, and foresight seemed to promise that the force at his command would be employed to the best advantage. It was no small proof of both his resolution and his address that, as the national guard could

not be employed out of the routine of their regular duty without a special order from the mayor, he contrived in the course of the 9th to extort from Pétion a formal authority to increase the number of the troops employed in the protection of the palace, and, if force should be used against him, to repel it by force. His own brigade numbered about 2400 men. The Swiss guards did not quite make up a thousand more; there were also a few hundred heavy cavalry of the gendarmerie; who, however, were not calculated to be of any great use in a confined space, even had they been well disposed, but most of whom were already won over by the Jacobins. Eleven cannon also were procured; and on the evening of the 9th the whole force was judiciously distributed at the different points which were the most open to attack, or the defence of which was most important.

Pétion himself, with superfluous hypocrisy, paid a visit to the palace, professing a desire to aid in the arrangements for its safety; though, when Mandat complained that his men were almost destitute of powder and cartridges, he refused to sign an order for a fresh supply, in spite of it being notorious that the police had served out ammunition to the Marseillese. The indignant soldiers began to talk of detaining him as a hostage for the king's safety; he was terrified at their menacing looks, but contrived to send a message to the Assembly to beg them to summon him before them: and, when he reached their hall, with a pretence even more ridiculous than that which he had used towards the king, since he was addressing men whom he did not wish to believe him, and who knew his participation in all their designs, and the views of personal aggrandizement which he built on their success, he made them a formal statement of the means

which he asserted that he had taken to prevent the threatened assemblage of the populace and the ringing of the tocsin. Even before he had finished speaking events demonstrated his falsehood. The leaders of the insurrection had possessed themselves of all the churches; at midnight from every tower and steeple the fatal sound was heard to peal, and Pétion proceeded to the Hôtel de Ville.*

He found, as he was aware that he should find, a new municipal council. The majority of the sections of the city had declared themselves in insurrection; and, passing resolutions that they would no longer obey the constituted authorities, had appointed a body of commissioners to overbear them, trusting in the cowardice of the majority, and in the co-operation of the more violent members, Danton, Manuel, and their adherents. Even Pétion was not ferocious enough for these desperate men; or, if they did not doubt his wickedness, they mistrusted his resolution. They considered that they had already had one specimen of his weakness in the order which he had given Mandat; and they apprehended that other officers equally resolute, if they could obtain access to him, might extort similar orders from him, which might spoil their scheme. The steps which they took to hinder their plans from being disconcerted by the authority which he had already given to repel force by force, and to prevent the issue of any more documents of the same tenor, were, like many other measures of the time, half comical and half ferocious. They put him, the mayor of their own choice, under a sort of honorable arrest, sending him to his own house under

* "Mémoires de M. de Ferrières," liv. xii. vol. iii. p. 181; "Histoire de la Terreur," liv. vii. vol. ii. p. 238.

the guard of an armed force; which was ordered to grant no one access to him. And they despatched a messenger to the Tuilleries to summon Mandat to their presence as wishing to concert with him the measures necessary to preserve tranquillity. His own judgment, which coincided with that of the ministers who were with the king, prompted him to disobey the summons; but M. Rœderer, the chief legal adviser of the department of the Seine, who was present at the palace the whole night, persuaded him that he could not resist the order which had been brought in the name of the mayor. Those writers who have looked only at the fatal results of Rœderer's counsel on this point, and at the still more calamitous consequences of the advice which a few hours later he pressed on the king himself, have accused him of deliberate treachery to the royal cause. But it seems more probable that he was acting in good faith; and that, not being in the secret of the conspirators, he was bewildered by the success of their first measures and by the manifest disaffection of part of the troops.

Mandat, at all events, had reason to repent surrendering his own judgment to his guidance. He explained to the council the measures which he had taken, justifying them not only by their manifest necessity, but by the authority of the mayor; and though the more ardent members reproached him for having provoked the impending riot by steps which they pronounced a premature display of distrust, and declared that he would be held responsible for all the mischiefs which might ensue, they appeared to acquiesce in his dismissal to return to the palace and continue the discharge of his duties.* But the com-

* M. Mortimer Ternaux was the writer to bring to light this double examination of Mandat. It had been generally represented that on his

missioners, who had appropriated another apartment in the Hôtel de Ville, were not prepared to let him off so easily; on leaving the municipal chamber he was dragged before them; Manuel following, to give by his official character, as the attorney-general of the council, an air of legality to their usurpation of the council's functions. They had chosen for their president a man named Huguenin, a shopkeeper's clerk, who had been recommended to the post by the excessive ferocity of his language at the bar of the Assembly on the 20th of June. And by him and his colleagues Mandat was again examined and browbeaten. He behaved with great firmness and discretion; replying to their questions on some points, evading others to which he could not have replied without giving information which would have been serviceable to the insurgents, and positively refusing to sign an order which Huguenin laid before him, directing the withdrawal of a portion of the troops from the palace. The municipal council itself became alarmed at the commissioners' manifest intention to proceed to extremities, and sent down a deputation to remonstrate with them. Their reply was a defiance, and an assertion that the people had transferred the power from the council to themselves as their only representatives; which they proceeded to exercise by passing a resolution suspending the whole council with the exception of the mayor, Manuel, and a few others; and following it up by marching into their chamber and turning the members out by force. Some of the council sent a deputation to the Assembly to solicit directions

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arrival at the Hôtel de Ville he was at once brought before the commissioners, and on leaving them was murdered on the steps of the Hôtel. M. Ternaux quotes as his authorities the short-hand writer's report and the "Journal des Débats et Décrets."

for their conduct; others drew up a protest against the violence with which they were treated; but all submitted: and the commissioners, now in possession of uncontrolled authority, first sent Mandat in custody to the Abbey, and then sent a band of assassins to force the prison and murder him.*

The news of his fate soon reached the Tuileries, where the king was preparing to review the troops that had been assembled for his defence, with the queen, his sister, and the little dauphin; who, even if he himself should be slain, would, he trusted, be permitted to succeed to the throne, and reign perhaps the more happily for his own sacrifice and sufferings. He visited first the courts of the palace and the Carrousel, and then the gardens, at whose different entrances the troops were stationed. Even of those regiments which were true to him the cheers were in general faint and hesitating, the Swiss guard alone showing any enthusiasm in their loyalty or firmness in their resolution; while many companies mingled shouts for the nation with those for himself: and there were even individuals who murmured audibly "Down with the veto," and "Long live the Sans-Culottes:" secure that their officers would not dare to reprove, much

* M. Mortimer Ternaux, whose account of these transactions has been my chief guide, admits the extreme difficulty which previous writers have had to contend with who were ignorant of the official documents to which he has had access. And it is not easy to reconcile even his account with that of Madame de Campan, on whom for many particulars he relies. He differs from her especially as to the time at which the different transactions took place. He says (268, note 2,) that Mandat left the Tuileries soon after five, A.M.; that the royal family came in after the review at half-past seven (286, note 4); and that they quitted the Tuileries for the Assembly at half-past eight (p. 295): while Madame de Campan, who was with the queen, affirms that it was only four o'clock when the queen told her that Mandat had been murdered; and that the review took place immediately afterwards. She agrees, however, with the statement that it was soon after eight that the king left the palace.

less to chastise them. Some of the artillerymen, on whom much depended, were still more open in their disaffection; quitting their ranks to offer the king personal insults, doubling their fists in his face,* and shouting out the coarsest threats which the Revolution had yet taught them. Both cheers and insults the hapless king received with almost equal apathy. The despair which was in his heart was shown even in his dress, which had no military character or decoration, but was a suit of plain violet, only worn by kings of France on occasions of mourning. It was to no purpose that the queen put arms in his hands and exhorted him to take the command and show himself ready to fight in person for his throne.† Once or twice he uttered a few words of acknowledgment to his adherents, of expostulation to his threateners: and, pale with the effort, returned to his apartments. The queen was almost in despair; she saw that from his want of energy the review had done harm rather than good. All that she could do was to show herself not wanting to the occasion nor to him. Her courage rather rose with the imminence of the danger. Those who beheld her, as with dilating eyes and heightened colour she listened to the increasing tumult, and, repressing every appearance of terror, strove with unabated energy to animate her husband, and to fortify the good disposition of the troops around her, have described in terms of enthusiastic admiration the majestic dignity of her demeanour at this trying moment. She had need of all her presence of mind; for even among those on whom she could most rely dissensions were springing up. At the first alarm a

* Madame de Campan, c. xxi.

† "Mémoires de M. de Ferrières," xii.

body of gallant nobles and gentlemen, many of whom had belonged to the constitutional guard, with the veteran Marshal De Mailly at their head, had hastened to the palace to put their swords at the disposal of their sovereign. But the national guards were jealous of them. It seemed as if they were to be kept nearest to the royal person : and the soldiers disdained to serve with, much more to yield the post of honour to men who were not in uniform, and whom, as they were mostly in court dress, they distrusted as aristocrats. They besought the queen to dismiss them. "Never," said she; and trusting that the example of their self-devotion might stimulate those who thus complained, and full of that royal magnanimity which feels that it does honour to those whom it trusts, and that it has a right to look for the loyalty of its servants even in death, she added, "They will serve with you and share your dangers. They will fight with you in the van, in the rear, as you will; they will show you how men can die for their king."

But, while these occurrences had proved some even of the troops who were arrayed for the defence of the palace to be disaffected, and others doubtful, the insurgents were rapidly approaching, and already the tramp of the leading column might be heard. The tocsin had continued its ominous sound throughout the night; and at six in the morning the main body of the insurgents, consisting of the practised rioters of the suburbs of St. Antoine and St. Marceau, 20,000 strong and well armed, for the new municipal council had thrown open the arsenal to them, began their march towards the Tuilleries. As they advanced they were joined by the Marseilles brigade, which had been quartered in a barrack near

the Cordeliers, and their numbers were further swelled by thousands of the populace. Their leaders were Santerre and a man named Westermann, who had formerly been a notary in Alsace, but had recently come to Paris, had made the acquaintance of Danton, and had been distinguished by him for his unscrupulous hardihood, as well as for a certain degree of military talent. And soon after eight in the morning they reached the Carrousel, forced the gates, and pressed on to the royal court, the national guards and the Swiss falling back before them to the entrance to the royal apartments, where the confined space seemed to afford a prospect of making a more effectual resistance. But already the palace was deserted by those who were the intended objects of the attack. Rœderer, with Borie and Leroux, two of the municipal magistrates, in whom the indignity with which the new commissioners of the sections had treated them had excited a feeling of personal resentment which prompted them to desire the chastisement of those to whom they attributed it, had been actively endeavouring to rouse the national guards to an energetic resistance. But they had wholly failed. Those who listened to them most favorably would only promise to defend themselves if they should be attacked; while some of the artillerymen drew the charges of their guns and extinguished the matches. Rœderer was not a man of that fiery courage which hopes against hope, and can stimulate waverers by its example. His heart too was far from whole in the cause; for he was not altogether a stranger to the intrigues of the Orleanists, and he had no wish to place an insurmountable barrier between himself and them or the Girondins, or whoever should ultimately get the upper hand in the struggle which was commen-

cing. He saw, too, that if the insurgents should succeed in storming the palace and should find the king and his family there, the moment that made them masters of their persons would be the last of their lives and of the monarchy. He returned into the palace to represent to Louis the utter hopelessness of making any defence, and that his sole resource was to seek the protection of the Assembly. The king said nothing. The queen, who, had she been alone to be consulted, would, to use her own words, have preferred being nailed to the walls of the palace rather than seek a refuge which she deemed degrading, pointed to the troops, and showed by her gestures that they were the only proper protectors to look to. Rœderer assured her they could not be relied on: he described their recent behaviour in reply to his exhortations, and affirmed that the Assembly was the only body which the people at such a moment would respect. Leroux had already made the same proposal, and had supported it by similar arguments.* She seemed unconvinced. Rœderer almost forgot his respect in his earnestness. "If you refuse, madam, you will be guilty of the blood of the king, of your two children. You will destroy yourself, and every soul within the palace." While she was still hesitating between anger and anxiety for those dear to her, the king gave the word. "Let us go," said he; "let us give this last proof of our devotion to the constitution." The princess spoke: "Could Rœderer answer for the king's life?" He affirmed that he would answer for it with his own. The queen repeated the question. At least, he replied, he would pledge himself to die at his side.

* "Histoire de la Terreur," quoting the examination of Leroux; and De Ferrières, liv. xii. vol. iii. p. 190.

"Let us go," said Louis. Even at the last moment one officer, M. Boscari, the commanding officer of a battalion of the national guard, that of the Filles St. Thomas, whose loyalty no disaster had ever been able to shake, implored him to change his mind: his men, united to the Swiss, would be able, he said, to cut a way for the king to the Rouen road. The insurgents were on the other side of the city, and nothing could resist him. But still, as on all previous occasions, Louis rejected the advice, which would have required but the feeblest energy to adopt and act upon it. He pleaded the risk to which he should expose those dear to him; and led them to almost certain death in committing their safety to the Assembly. Some of De Mailly's band gathered round him to accompany him. Such an escort seemed to Rœderer to be dangerous; and at his entreaty Louis trusted himself to a company of his faithful Swiss and another of the national guards, who formed into a guard of honour to conduct him to the Assembly, whose hall, as has been mentioned before, looked on one side into the palace garden.

One of his ministers walked by his side; the queen leant on the arm of another, and led the dauphin by the hand; Madame Elizabeth led the princess royal; and thus, with the addition of two more of the ministers, the Princess de Lamballe and Madame de Tourzel, the royal family left the palace of their ancestors, in which only one of them was destined ever to set foot again. As they quitted the saloon, and moved down the stairs, and crossed the garden, their every step was one towards a downfall and destruction which could never be retraced. Marie Antoinette felt it to be so; and, as she reached the foot of the staircase, cast restless and anxious glances around, looking perhaps

even then for any prospect of succour or effectual resistance which might present itself. One of the soldiers misunderstood her, and with rude fidelity tried to encourage her. "Fear nothing, madam," said he, "your majesty is surrounded by honest citizens." She laid her hand on her heart; "I do fear nothing," she replied, and passed on without another word. The king broke the silence. Their way lay along an avenue of chesnuts, whose leaves were already strewing the ground, for the summer had been hot and dry. "How unusually early," he remarked, "the leaves fall this year." To those who heard the remark the stripping of the trees seemed an omen of his own fate, an emblem of himself about to be stripped of his royal dignity; perhaps, even, like some superfluous crowder of the grove, to fall beneath the axe. The Assembly had already been deliberating whether it should send to invite him to a refuge in its hall, when it was informed that he was approaching. It instantly voted that a deputation should be sent to meet him; which after a few words of respectful salutation fell in behind. A vast crowd was collected outside the doors of the Assembly's hall. They hooted the king, and still more the queen, as they advanced. "Down with Veto," was the chief cry; but mingled with it were still more unmanly insults, invoking especially death on all the women. But the guards kept them at a distance; Rœderer harangued them, and for a moment pacified them by an assurance that the passage of the king and his whole family to the Assembly was in compliance with a decree passed by that body. When they reached the hall, the Jacobin deputies made an attempt to deprive them of the protection which the national guard had hitherto afforded them. They cried out that it was illegal for soldiers to enter the hall,

as indeed it was; yet without them the princes must have been at the last moment exposed to all the fury of the mob. At this critical moment Rœderer showed both presence of mind and fidelity. He implored the deputies to suspend the law; and, while the Jacobins were reviling him and his proposal, he pretended to suppose that it had been agreed to, and led forward a detachment of the soldiers, who cleared the way; one grenadier took the dauphin in his arms and carried him in; and, though the pressure of the crowd was extreme, at last the whole family were placed within the hall in such safety as that body was able or disposed to afford them.

Louis bore himself not without dignity. "I am come here," was his address, "to prevent a great crime. I think that I cannot be better placed or safer, gentlemen, than among you." The president, who happened to be Vergniaud, while appearing to wish to inspire him with confidence, avoided uttering a word, except the single term Sire, which should be a recognition of his royal dignity, if indeed his speech was not rather a disavowal of it. Louis might reckon, he said, on the firmness of the National Assembly; its members had sworn to die in support of the rights of the people and of the constituted authorities. And then, on the plea that the Assembly must continue its deliberations, and that the law forbade them to be conducted in the presence of the sovereign, it assigned him and his family a little box behind the president's chair, which was usually set apart for the short-hand reporters of the debates. Chabot had proposed their removal to one of the committee rooms, with the idea, as he afterwards boasted, that it would be easy there to admit a band of assassins to murder them all; but Vergniaud and his party divined his object and overruled him. Yet,

compared with the fate which was in store for the victims, prompt assassination would have been a mercy. And it is a remarkable instance of the rapidity with which unprincipled men like the Girondins sink deeper and deeper into iniquity, that they who now laboured successfully to save the life of Louis, five months afterwards were as unanimous as the most ferocious Jacobins in destroying him.

It would be hard to say which was now the bitterest trial to the unhappy Louis; to hear the progress of the tumult without, or the denunciations of himself and his queen, and the proposals for his degradation, which, with pitiless shamelessness, deputy after deputy brought forward, regardless of his presence. On quitting the Tuilleries he had shown great solicitude for the safety of De Mailly and his comrades, but had been comforted by Rœderer's assurance that, as they were not in uniform, they would be able to escape without observation. And he had imagined that when it should be known that he had left the palace, the insurgents, having no longer a pretext for attacking it, would forbear provoking a causeless conflict with the soldiers. The national guards on duty had the same expectation. Many retired; some from sympathy, more, in the hope of thus saving themselves, joined the insurgents; and presently none remained at their posts but the brave and faithful Swiss. They however had no desire to provoke a contest with twenty times their numbers; and by remaining stationary hoped to avoid attack. But the insurgents were bent on their destruction. Santerre led his division to the Hôtel de Ville, where the commissioners of the sections nominated him commander-in-chief of the national guard; and on this promotion he left the conduct of active operations to

Westermann. Danton's pupil proceeded to justify his expectations of him. He prepared to batter down the gates of the palace, but that labour he was spared. The porters not thinking themselves called upon to expose their lives for the empty palace, opened them, and fled. His followers had no pretext for violence; for even of the troops no one now offered them active opposition. Of the gendarmes and artillery many even joined them; and, though the Swiss refused to lay down their arms at his summons, they remained inactive and inoffensive, standing only on their own defence. Unable to succeed by force, he tried artifice; speaking to some of the privates in German, and endeavouring to seduce them to betray their officers; while some of his men, under pretence of shaking hands with those in front, dragged them from their ranks and disarmed them, till their officers threw up a barrier of loose spars before them to prevent a repetition of such treachery. Meanwhile the crowd pressed up the stairs, and, as it increased, redoubled their threatening cries, and presently a pistol shot was fired. It was probably an accidental discharge, for no one was hit, but the Swiss took it for the signal for an attack on them: and then it was seen that their assailants were as cowardly as they were cruel. Thinking the time was come to defend their own lives, they levelled their muskets and fired; charged down the stairs, driving Westermann and his ruffians before them like sheep; cleared the royal court; forced their way into the Carrousel; recovered the cannon which were posted in that large square; and were so completely victorious that, had there been any superior officer to direct their valour on any well-considered plan, it would seem that they might even now have checked the insurrection. One gallant officer had the ability and resolu-

tion to conceive such an idea and to attempt to execute it. Some wooden out-buildings on one side of the Carrousel had taken fire, the smoke from which was seen in the Assembly hall, and, added to the roar of the musketry, struck the deputies with a general panic. A report too reached them that the mob had got possession of some cannons, and were preparing to batter down the palace itself. Some prepared to flee; others cried out that they would stay and meet death in their places; all thought that their last hour was at hand. And, to pacify them, Dubouchage, one of the ministers, announced that Louis had issued an order that the Swiss should retire to their barracks. It was not easy to convey it to them, for the gardens between the hall and the palace were crowded with the rioters; but M. d'Hervilly undertook the task, hoping to find in its performance a means of extricating the king from a position so full of degradation and danger as that which he now occupied. He succeeded in reaching them, and, suppressing the order for their retreat, called on them to follow him to the rescue of the king. They hesitated; not from disloyalty, but from solicitude for their own wounded comrades, whom such a movement would compel them to leave to the mercy of their enemies. The wounded men themselves forbade them to delay; their duty was to save the king; for themselves, they could die where they lay.* Thus exhorted they gladly obeyed D'Hervilly's summons. Forming in close order, and as steady as on parade, they marched through the garden; one battalion moving towards the end opposite to the palace where there was a drawbridge which it was important to secure; the other following D'Hervilly to

* "Histoire de la Terreur," viii. 4.

the Assembly-hall. From behind the trees a dropping fire was directed upon them, but without arresting their advance; they would not deign to reply to it, but pressed steadily on, forced their way up the stairs, and in a few moments a young officer, M. de Salis, at the head of a small detachment, sword in hand rushed into the chamber. Some of the deputies shrieked and fled. Others, more calm, went down to the outer gates, reminded the commander that armed men were forbidden to enter, and summoned him to disarm his battalion. He refused, and sent in a subaltern to the king for orders. Even the scenes of the morning, the deliberate attack of an armed mob upon his palace, his own compulsory flight, and the disrespectful treatment which he had received from the Assembly itself, had failed to eradicate his unwillingness to authorize his own guards to fight on his behalf; or to convince him that, when at least his throne and perhaps his life and that of all his family were at stake, it was nobler to struggle for victory, and if defeated to die with arms in his hands, than tamely to sit still and be stripped of his kingly dignity by brigands and traitors. Could he but have summoned energy to put himself at the head of his faithful Swiss, or even to say one cheering word to them as he sent them to battle, it was evident that there was still hope. Of all Westermann's and Santerre's ruffians none had dared to face them; they had forced their way to him successfully. And though the other column was being fiercely attacked on its way to the drawbridge, their junction with it might have given it the superiority. But still Louis could not bring himself to act; he could only suffer. His command to the officer, the last he ever issued, was for the whole battalion to lay down their arms. He would

not, he said, that such brave men should die.* They knew that in fact he was consigning them and their comrades to death, and to death without honour. But they were obedient to the last; they laid down their arms. The privates were moved off as prisoners to the church of the Feuillants behind the Assembly hall: the officers were shut up in two or three small rooms behind the chamber; from which when night came a few were saved by the pity of a deputy named Bruat. When all around were merciless, some from inborn ferocity, others from still baser fear, his courageous sympathy deserves an honourable mention. He brought them clothes to exchange for their uniforms, and let them out by a secret door. A servant named Daigremont was equally bold; and by the aid of these two men fourteen were saved, the greater part of whom after a time found their way to their native land. The rest were massacred in cold blood.

Not more fortunate was the other battalion, except in perishing by a more soldier-like death. As their road lay through a more open part of the garden the smallness of their numbers encouraged their enemies, who closed in upon their rear, shooting down and sabring many. In front of the drawbridge was a battalion of national guards; they ought to have received them as comrades, but they had caught the contagion of rebellion, and fired on them. The Swiss charged through them, forced their way to the Place Louis XV., and there formed in square, resolved to sell their lives dearly. It was all that was left to them to do. The mounted gendarmerie too came up, and turned against them. Hemmed in on all sides, they fell

* "Déposez les [armes] entre les mains de la garde nationale. Je ne veux pas que des braves gens comme vous perissent."—"Histoire de la Terreur," viii. 5.

one after another. Louis, who had refused to let them die for him, having only given their death the additional sting that it had been of no service to him.

The mob, worked up to frenzy by their own atrocities, extended the rancour with which they had pursued that heroic band to the whole nation, and even to some who had no connexion with it but in the name which had accidentally been given to their calling. From the circumstance of the chief porter at Versailles, in the time of Louis XV., a man conspicuous for his height and symmetry, being a native of the Cantons, it had become the fashion to call porters in general Swiss, and though most of them, as was natural, were in fact true-born Frenchmen, the rioters dragged them from their lodges and tore them to pieces on account of their obnoxious name.* Those who escaped came in terror to their masters and begged that they might be called porters in future, and the old title has never been resumed, so deep was the enmity with which the devotion of the guard to their king had caused it to be regarded by the whole mass of the populace. Their own countrymen viewed their conduct with very different feelings: with pride in their unshaken fidelity, and in their heroic deaths, which in their eyes did honour to their whole nation. Among that simple people rewards are measured not by their costliness, but by the sentiment which has caused them to be bestowed, and by the character of the acts for which they are given; and with such rewards the Diet of their country now honoured those who had survived the slaughter of their comrades. To each was given an iron medal with the well-merited inscription, which might be taken to stand for the

* Dr. Moore's Journal, i. 69.

character of the wearers, "Fidelity and honour;" and to those who fell, a monument is erected at Lucerne: the effigy is a wounded lion, the inscription testifies that it commemorates "the ill-treated but invincible soldier."

Meantime the insurgents were masters of the Tuilleries, which the departure of the Swiss had left wholly unprotected. Furious to find that the royal family had escaped them, they wreaked their rage on the lifeless furniture, breaking, hewing, and destroying in every way that wantonness or malice could suggest. Vast was the ruin, inestimable the plunder. Things which had belonged to the queen were the most especial objects of their wrath; crowds of the vilest of women arrayed themselves in her dresses, or defiled her bed. Her looking-glasses were broken with imprecations merely because they had reflected her features; her footmen were pursued and slaughtered solely because they had been wont to obey her.* Nor were the monsters who slew them content with murder. They tore the dead bodies to pieces; devoured the still bleeding fragments, or deliberately lit fires and cooked them; or hoisting the severed limbs on pikes, carried them in fiendish triumph about the streets.

There were instances in which those who had carried off money or jewels from the palace disdained to retain them; but, wishing to show the purity of their republicanism, brought their booty to the Assembly. There were instances in which the murderers

* A workman who, against his will, had been compelled to march with the insurgents, told Madame de Campan:—"Ces horribles femmes hier à minuit sur la Place de la Bastille disaient qu'il leur fallait la revanche du 6 Octobre de Versailles, et elles avaient fait serment de tuer de leurs propres mains la reine et toutes les femmes qui lui sont attachées."—"Mém. de Madame de Campan," c. 21.

spared those who were in their power, and saved those whom they had been about to slay. One of the Marseillese had laid hold of Madame de Campan, and was about to plunge his sword into her bosom when he was arrested by the voice of one of his comrades: "The women were not to be killed;" and at night she was allowed to renew her attendance on her mistress. Thus the insurgents took upon themselves to deal with the royal palace. Not less irresistible, nor less furious, were the attacks made in the Assembly on the kingly authority. From their windows the deputies could see the flames of the most fearful funeral pile that had ever been constructed; no grave could contain the numerous dead, so vast masses of fire-wood were brought into the garden and kindled into one gigantic pyre; on it were thrown the dead, the gallant nobles, the faithful guards, with the vile Marseillese, and other bloodthirsty ruffians to whom the conflict had also proved fatal. The flames rose high, illuminating the surrounding district with a light brighter than that of day, and to the craven legislators affording a terrible warning of the fate in store for those who should oppose the will of the people. Half of them were terrified into helplessness, half of them sympathized with the most desperate of the rioters. By an unheard-of assumption Huguenin led a deputation of his new council among them, announcing that they came to concert with them measures necessary for the public safety; that Pétion, Manuel, and Danton were their colleagues, and that Santerre was at the head of the armed force.* The hint was sufficient. Guadet, to whom Vergniaud had surrendered the president's chair, thanked them for

* "Histoire de la Terreur," viii. 7.

their zeal, and assured them that the Assembly saw in them only virtuous citizens eager for the restoration of peace and order. A vote was carried recognising them as the new municipal council; a fresh oath was taken by all the deputies to maintain liberty and equality; and, after some petitions, each exceeding the last in violence, had been presented, Vergniaud rose to show his interpretation of these alluring words by moving resolutions for the suspension of Louis from all kingly authority, for his confinement in the Luxembourg, for the impeachment of his ministers, and for the immediate summoning of a National Convention. Other votes re-appointed Roland, and his colleagues, Servan and Clavière, to the offices from which the king had dismissed them, with two men named Monge and Lebrun, as ministers of marine and foreign affairs, and the savage Danton as minister of justice. Another provided pay for the Marseillese and for the gangs which the other departments had sent to Paris to bear their part in the insurrection.

All these votes and the discussions concerning them, which, however, were little more than variations of foul abuse and calumny of the king and queen, the unhappy princes were compelled to hear in their narrow box. They bore the insults, the queen with her accustomed dignity, the king with his usual apathy, speaking occasionally with apparent cheerfulness to some of the deputies. At half-past three in the morning the Assembly adjourned, and he and his family were removed to the Feuillants Convent, where four wretched cells had been hastily furnished with camp beds and a few other necessaries of the coarsest description. So little was it attempted to be concealed that they were prisoners that their domestic servants were not allowed the next day to attend them without

a formal ticket of admittance; yet even in her extremity of distress Marie Antoinette thought of others not of herself; and when at last her faithful attendant Madame de Campan obtained access to her, her first words expressed how greatly her own sorrows were aggravated by the thought that she had involved in them those faithful friends whose attachment merited a very different recompense.*

* Madame de Campan, c. 21.

CHAPTER XLII.

VERGNIAUD'S motion had only been for the suspension of the king from his functions till the meeting of the Convention; but no one could doubt that it would never be taken off, and that he was practically dethroned. The queen never deceived herself on the point, and retaining the opinion about the fate of deposed monarchs which she had before expressed, said that all was over for them. The Assembly itself took care that no one else should have a doubt on the subject, and its new decrees were no longer superscribed with the royal title, but were published "in the name of the nation." In one point they were not carried out exactly as they had been passed. The municipal authorities represented to the Assembly that there were so many outlets and subterranean passages leading from the Luxembourg that it would be hard to prevent the escape of a prisoner from that palace. And accordingly the destination of the royal family was changed to the Temple. Thither, after having been compelled to spend two more days in the Assembly to hear the denunciations and threats of their enemies, whom even the knowledge that they had them in their power had failed to pacify, they were conveyed on the 13th, and they never quitted it till they were dragged forth to die.

The Temple had been, as its name implies, the fortress and palace of the Templar knights, and,

having been erected by them in the palmy days of their wealth and magnificence, contained besides some lofty and strong towers which had been built for defence, spacious chambers, and extensive gardens, protected from intrusion by a high wall, which surmounted the whole. Nor, though the glories of its founders had passed away, was it even now altogether unfit for or unaccustomed to the reception of princes, for a portion of it had been furnished by the Count d'Artois, and had been used by him as his residence whenever he visited the capital. It was to these chambers that those who had the custody of the august prisoners first conducted them, supposing naturally that they were the abode designed for them. But fierce and brutal as they were, they had failed to estimate the greater brutality of those who now had the supreme authority, or the pleasure which they found in devising gratuitous insults and hardships for their victims. After the misery of the last four days, and the narrow reporters' box, within the hearing of hourly insults, which might at any moment become active outrages, the spaciousness and security of the old palace seemed to cheer its new inhabitants, and Louis found some occupation and relief in distributing the different apartments among his family and attendants. Such consolation as could be derived from so novel a task did not last long. It presently occurred to the municipality that the new lodging was too comfortable, or too honourable; and that very night, before the prisoners retired to rest, an order came down that they should be transferred from the palace to a small dilapidated tower within the precincts, which had occasionally been used as a lodging for some of the Count d'Artois' footmen, but whose bare walls and broken windows rendered it unfit for even the servants of a prince. Besides their meanness and

ruinous condition, the number of the rooms it contained was so scanty that the Princess Elizabeth's bed was made in the kitchen, and the dungeon-like appearance of the whole impressed all the family more strongly than ever with the idea that the fate which the queen had more than once spoken of, as that of deposed sovereigns in general, was rapidly preparing for them.

Even this distress was presently aggravated by fresh severity. Four days afterwards a fresh order commanded the removal of all their attendants, except one or two menial servants. Madame de Tourzel, the dauphin's governess, was driven out with insults; Madame de Lamballe, that most faithful and affectionate friend of the queen and the whole family, was rudely torn from her embrace by the municipal officers, and dragged off to the prison, where she was soon to pay the forfeit of her loyalty with her blood. And these faithful followers were replaced by Simon, a shoemaker of notorious ferocity of manner and disposition; and by a saddler's journeyman named Rocher, who was expected to prove, and who did prove still more wanton and insolent in his cruelty than Simon. This man's pastime was to harass his victims with every kind of ignoble insult and annoyance. He would push against them in the passages; he puffed tobacco smoke in the queen's face; he taught the little dauphin coarse expressions and ribald speeches, which the child in his ignorant simplicity repeated to his mother and his aunt; and the daily privations to which they were exposed were even more galling than these insults. They were denied the use of pen and ink lest they should communicate with those of their adherents who were still at liberty. They were allowed to receive nothing that was not first opened and searched.

They were destitute even of clothes, for those which they had possessed had been destroyed in the sack of the Tuilleries, and to the attention of their adherents, and in some instances even of strangers, they were indebted for the merest necessaries. Those who contributed them did so at the risk of their lives, with which some of them did actually expiate their dutiful liberality. One could do so without fear of consequences; and an English writer may record with pride that it was a countrywoman of his own, Lady Sutherland, the wife of the British ambassador, from whom the little dauphin, being of the same age as her own son, received the necessary supplies of raiment. To such a state of destitution was he now reduced, who a few years before had been the most powerful and prosperous sovereign on the continent of Europe, and who had contributed not a little to wrest his fairest colonies from that very king to whose minister his heir was now indebted for the merest necessaries.* But the supply thus received wore out, and, as all means of replacing it were refused, the queen and princess might be seen plying the needle diligently like ordinary sempstresses to mend their clothes and the king's, that they might not appear to their gaolers, or the dwellers around, who from their windows could command a view of

* Lord Gower and Lady Sutherland exhibited throughout rare examples of dignified intrepidity. We read in a letter in Lord Auckland's Journals, ii. 434:—"After the Paris mob had been at Lord Gower's to get hold of his Swiss for the declared purpose of cutting off his head because he was a Swiss, the ruling powers offered him a guard. He refused this on the high ground of being protected by his official character, &c., but thought it prudent, however, to publish that circumstance as much as possible by writing in large letters over his door, 'Hôtel de l'Ambassadeur de l'Angleterre.' Lady Sutherland, writing about this to a friend, thus concludes her letter:—'Now we have done all we can; and if the mob attacks us now, it is their concern, not ours.'"

the garden in which they took their daily walks, absolutely ragged.

The discussions to which the captive sovereigns had been doomed to listen were ominous, not only of their own fate, but of the future destinies of the nation, if men such as those who now were invested with authority were to retain it. The new municipal council was but half completed. But before they were transferred to the Temple the rest of the members had presented themselves to the Assembly for confirmation of their election; and at the head of them was Robespierre. While the battle was raging on the 10th, he had not been seen; quaking with terror at the sound of the guns, he had hidden himself in a cellar.* But as soon as the danger was passed he reappeared, and by the influence of the Jacobins became one of the new municipal board, an appointment of evil omen for king and noble, indeed for all to whom life was dear. The Girondins had planned the insurrection; the Jacobins were to reap the fruits. But the Assembly warred not only with the living; it would fain efface all recollection of former royalty, and, in concert with the municipal council, ordered the demolition of the statues of those ancestors of Louis who had worn the crown, some of whom had long been regarded with pride, and one of whom was still cherished in the affectionate recollection of the country in general. There was not much harm done in overthrowing that, beautiful as a work of art though it was, which represented the features of the infamous lover of Madame de Pompadour; but the statue of Louis XIV., the patron of Colbert and of Molière, the conqueror of Alsace and Franche-Comté, the negotiator of the

* "Mémoires de M. de Ferrières," iii. 204, *note*.

Peace of Nimeguen, was involved in the same destruction; and with that fell the image of the victor of Ivry, the overthrower of the League, the restorer of peace, the first champion of religious liberty, the friend of his people, the magnanimous Henry IV. Those who proposed such acts of Vandalism may have deluded themselves with the idea that they were displaying their hatred of kings. They were in truth exhibiting their irreconcileable antagonism with every kindly sentiment, with every noble aspiration, with past glory, with present security, with every prejudice of civilization, with every sentiment of decency and humanity.

But if the citizens exulted or acquiesced in this overthrow of all that they had been wont to reverence, the feelings with which the provincials heard of these transactions were of a very different complexion. By them the intelligence was received with disgust and horror. Many of the departmental assemblies formally disowned them, and refused obedience to their edicts as invalid without the signature of the king and the royal ministers. Rouen, Amiens, Nancy, and Strasburg, were especially plain spoken in their refusal to recognise the assumption of the supreme power by the Assembly; and the council of the department of the Upper Rhine published a general order declaring its adherence to "the constitutional king, its resolution to maintain the royal authority, and its confidence that the knowledge of his humanity and justice would soon recover for him the public confidence."* But of all places the most open manifestation of this feeling took place at Sedan. Under the walls of that frontier fortress Lafayette had his

* "Histoire de la Terreur," liv. ix. vol. iii. 45.

head-quarters, and his conduct during the previous two months sufficiently proved with what eyes he would regard the overthrow of both the king and constitution. On the very night of the 10th the Assembly had nominated commissioners to bear to the different armies the intelligence of what it had done, and to require their instant adhesion to the new order of things, and had further invested them with a general authority to put under arrest any functionary, civil or military, and even the generals themselves if they should find it expedient. But with respect to Lafayette, even such a measure as this did not appear strong enough. Robespierre, as the organ of the municipality, came to the Assembly to denounce him, and the ministers adopted an unanimous resolution to deprive him of his command, whatever might be his reception of the commissioners or their judgment of his conduct. The commissioners, however, failed to take him by surprise; one of his staff had been in Paris on the morning of the 10th, and had at once quitted it to relate the king's situation. And Lafayette, who was convinced that the people in general had had no anticipation of the outrages which had been committed, and who felt equally assured that they would not submit to them, instantly concerted measures with the mayor of Sedan to arouse the department of the Ardennes, to which the fortress belonged, to a prompt and effectual resistance. To his own soldiers he issued a general order conceived in the same spirit, reminding them of their oath to maintain the constitution, and calling on them as good citizens and brave soldiers to rally round it. And when on the evening of the 14th the commissioners arrived, the council of Sedan announced to them their decision to keep them as hostages for the restoration of the king to

liberty, and of the National Assembly to independence; put them under arrest; and confined them in the castle, for which Lafayette at once supplied an adequate guard.

But, as had happened before, he had committed himself to measures beyond his strength to carry out; he was not even supported by his own comrades. Luckner, who was his superior officer, though disapproving of the destruction of the constitution as completely as himself, was too apprehensive of the power of its destroyers to defy them; while General Arthur Dillon and Dumouriez, who were to a certain extent under his own orders, accepted what had been done. Dillon, indeed, unwillingly; but Dumouriez cordially, conceiving that Louis in accepting his resignation had released him from all personal obligation, and resolved not to endanger his hold over the army, with whose aid he reckoned on building himself up a reputation which might hereafter enable him to dictate to those whom he was now compelled to obey. Lafayette also learned that the council of the Aisne, on whose co-operation, from the conduct of the magistrates in reference to the outrages of the 20th of June he had securely relied, had changed their politics. They not only acquiesced in the suspension of the king, but issued orders to arrest Lafayette himself if he should come within their boundaries. He found therefore that, however eager he might be to serve his captive sovereign, he was utterly powerless; while, though as yet he knew not the decision which the ministers had formed respecting him, he could entertain no doubt that they would regard him as an enemy with whom no terms were to be kept, and that he must provide for his own safety. Indeed, the municipal council, and Assembly, and ministers, were all wrought up to

a pitch of unprecedented fury by hearing of his treatment of the commissioners. One deputy proposed that his name should be devoted to public execration; another, more practical in his revenge, moved the Assembly to outlaw him, and set a price upon his head. Merlin, the Jacobin, would have had his house rased to the ground, and a pillar erected on the spot where it had stood to record the foulness of his treason. And when they found that he himself was out of reach of their vengeance, they avenged themselves on his wife and children, who were living in unsuspecting security at his country-house in Auvergne, arrested them and threw them into prison, where they remained for nearly three years.

Before they could even pass a decree against himself, much more carry it into execution, he had quitted the country. It was not till the 19th that the news of the arrest of their commissioners reached the Assembly, and on that same morning he found that even his own troops were not unanimous in their obedience to him, but that, while one party was prepared to support him, even against the Assembly itself, another was inclined to obey the magistrates of Aisne, and arrest him. He could not deceive himself as to what would be the issue of such a division in his army. It was certain that the more revolutionary party was that which would gain strength, and would sooner or later overpower those who at present adhered to him. He felt he had no time to lose, and with his staff, and a few personal friends who shared his sentiments, Alexander Lameth, and Lautour Maubourg, who had been himself one of the commissioners sent to bring back the king from Varennes, being the most prominent among them, he crossed the frontier into the

Netherlands, with the intention of proceeding to England, hoping from that country to find a passage to America. He was greatly disappointed; he and his companions were seized by the first Austrian outpost, and conducted to Namur, where General Moitelle, who commanded in that district, at once pronounced them prisoners of war. They protested against such a decision, declaring that when they quitted the French army they had divested themselves of the character of enemies of the emperor, or of his allies; and they claimed to be considered as peaceful travellers, or at least as emigrants on the same footing as to liberty of movement with those at Coblentz. Moitelle rejected their claim; and though he has been often reproached for his decision, he was surely justified by every principle of strict military law. They had been officers in the French army that very morning, and he had a right to doubt whether men so employed could by the mere act of quitting their post divest themselves of that character. But no condemnation can be too severe for the conduct which the Austrian Government adopted towards them. It was beyond all question only as prisoners of war that they could be detained; if they were not such, they were free men on German soil. But the emperor resolved to treat them as political prisoners, though they were neither subjects of his nor amenable to German laws, nor guilty of any offence whatever against him or them. After a few weeks the inferior prisoners were released; but Lafayette was placed in strict confinement, being transferred from one fortress to another till he was finally lodged at Olmutz, in Moravia. There he lingered till the campaign of 1797 enabled a general, who was at this moment an unknown sub-

altern, to dictate terms of peace to the empire at Campo Formio, and to insist on his liberation as a French subject.

But, while these events were occurring on the frontier, the masters of Paris were passing decrees to which they had more power to give effect than to those against their general. They were enacted, as before, by the Assembly, but they were prepared in the new municipal council. That body had now become the real sovereign; in that Robespierre and Danton exercised absolute authority; and there they now began to raise the cry for blood which was never silenced till they themselves had both perished on the scaffold to which they had consigned thousands, and were preparing to consign more. Their first step was to constitute a tribunal which should have no duty but to condemn; Robespierre led the way to the bloodshed which was the one passion of his soul. On the 17th he presented a petition to the Assembly to demand "a sacrifice of expiation to the heroes who had fallen gloriously in obtaining the 10th of August for France;" to complain that that "immortal day was still barren of its full fruits, while the tyrant was only suspended, not deposed and punished; and to require the trial of him and his execrable accomplices, who were still conspiring against the people in their sumptuous gardens;" while a formal deputation from the council reiterated the same demands, enforcing them with the threat that, if they were not instantly granted, that very night the tocsin should again sound and the whole people arise in a fresh insurrection. The Girondins had not been prepared for such a measure, but they were powerless to resist it. From this day forth they found that, in dethroning the king, they had only exchanged one master for another;

the gentle Louis for the ferocious municipal council; and that if they would share its power they must be prepared to adopt its policy. The revolutionary tribunal was established; the judges were all carefully selected from the most violent section of the Jacobins, and so assured did Robespierre feel of their being sufficiently merciless, that he refused the post of chief judge which was offered to him, preferring to retain his place in the municipal council as one of greater political influence. The judges were installed the same day, and at once began their work. Yet there were some to whom even their rapidity of condemnation seemed too slow. So universal was the disgust excited by Marat's thirst for bloodshed, that even in the frenzy of the preceding week no section of the city could be induced to return him as its representative. But the council itself was less scrupulous; the members felt that his spirit was too nearly akin to their own for them to dispense with his presence, and by an extraordinary resolution granted him a seat among them, from which he vomited forth his hatred of all but those who were disposed to execute his threats. He began by complaining that the trials for which the new tribunal had been erected were superfluous; the fact of any one being imprisoned was in itself a sufficient evidence of his guilt; it would save time to drag forth the prisoners and at once put them all to death. There were those not far from him to whom the same idea had already occurred, and who were only awaiting their time to consummate it.

For every step of those who professed to have taken arms only to save the king, and still more every success which they gained, only tended the more to exasperate the people against him. The Duke of Brunswick's proclamation had furnished the dema-

gogues with a plausible plea for representing him as in league with the invaders, and when on the 26th news arrived that Longwy was taken, the ferocious leaders of the council conceived that they should be followed by the acquiescence if not the approbation of the citizens in the adoption of a measure which, as Danton expressed it, should strike terror into the Royalists. As he spoke the words he drew his hand across his throat to indicate the character of the plan to which he alluded; and from that instant he, with Robespierre, Camille Desmoulins, Manuel, Hebert, and other Jacobin leaders, all members of the municipal council, busied themselves in preparing to accomplish the threats which Marat had already foreshadowed to cement what that monster termed the anti-liberating alliance between dictatorship and assassination.*

They had other motives to kindle their own desire for some promiscuous slaughter which they could not venture to announce publicly. They were dissatisfied with their own creature, the revolutionary tribunal, which had given way to one or two freaks of mercy or justice which were as little tolerated as they had been little anticipated by its authors. They had been lawless and ferocious enough in most instances; they had sent Laporte to the scaffold for no other offence beyond that of having formed one of the king's household; and still more absurdly they had condemned a newspaper editor named Du Rozoy, because they found among his papers a number of stupid letters from correspondents which, though he had refused to publish them, proved, in the opinion

* "L'alliance liberatrice, ce sont ses propres expressions, de l'assassinat et de la dictateur."—"Histoire de la Terreur," iii. 188.

of the judges, the prevalence of a feeling of discontent with the existing authorities. And to strike additional terror into the whole city they had established a fresh guillotine in the Place Carrousel for their own victims. But the innocence of some of those who had been brought before them had been too clearly proved for the juries to convict; M. Montmorin, the former minister, and his brother, the governor of Fontainebleau, had defended themselves with a convincing clearness that had compelled their acquittal, and the failure of one prosecution had an evident tendency to lead to the escape of other prisoners also.

It was a still more serious cause of exasperation that the position of the council itself was endangered. Many of the sections began to give vent to dissatisfaction at the proceedings of their own commissioners, and the Assembly showed evident signs of an inclination to throw off their yoke. Danton redoubled his energy; availing himself of his official character as minister of justice, he compelled the Assembly to sanction a search of every house throughout the kingdom which the officers might suspect of sheltering disaffected persons or of containing arms. The search in Paris itself was to be completed within the week. The Assembly passed the vote required of it, which in fact was only designed to enable the council to destroy every one of whom it was jealous. Instantly orders were issued for all the inhabitants to keep in their houses; the shops were shut up, and the clubs; to take away every pretext for any one to move abroad; even the revolutionary tribunal was ordered to suspend its sittings. Guards were posted at every outlet of the city, and police-boats rowed up and down the river to arrest any one who might attempt to save

himself by flight; and when the whole population was thus hemmed in the search began. Woe to the man or woman who was from home when the searchers arrived; the mere fact of paying a visit to a neighbour was a crime. The visitor was hurried off to prison as a suspected person; the public seal was put on his doors: it was well if he did not involve his friend with whom he was found in his fate. Even those who had obeyed the order to remain at home were not more safe if they had provoked the enmity of the searchers or of any neighbour. The officer could gratify his private revenge under cover of his duty; the neighbour could denounce his foe to the officer. The number of those who on one pretext or another were torn from their families and consigned to dungeons which proved their death-cells has never been accurately known; the lowest computation reckons them at three thousand. Their names were entered in the gaol-books, which served for lists of proscription, and few were those who at the close of the next week survived to complain of the causeless severity which had been exercised towards them.

The Assembly, which had only passed the decree for this domiciliary visitation, as it was called, under the compulsion of fear, had its antipathy to the council strengthened by the use to which the decree was put. Its Girondin orators began to fear lest it might be employed even against themselves; and they had reason for their apprehensions. To increase their terror the council summoned before them Girey Dupré, the editor of the Patriote Français, a paper under Brissot's influence, and when he denied their authority and declined to appear, they had the strange insolence to invest the hotel of Servan, the war minister, on pretence that he had taken refuge there.

It was easy to conceive that their next demonstration would be against Brissot himself, and the Girondins saw that they must either anticipate the blow or be crushed beneath it. The insult offered to Servan was so preposterous that it furnished an excuse for strong measures; and Guadet, rising in his place in the Assembly, proposed a decree that the existing council should be dissolved and a new one appointed in its stead; and carried his proposal, though he was compelled to acquiesce at the same time in another resolution that the existing council had deserved well of the country. The Jacobins had been taken by surprise; but they were not the men to yield without a struggle. Tallien, the secretary of the council, summoned the members to an instant meeting, and measures were at once taken to render the decree of the Assembly worthless by delaying compliance with it. Robespierre was charged with the task of drawing up an address, which Pétion and Tallien carried to the bar of the Assembly, and which mingled with a justification of the conduct of the council during its existence the most insolent denunciation of Louis and all his family as "villainous fugitives," who owed their lives solely to the people's generosity and respect for the asylum which they had chosen. It boasted of the arrests which had been the consequence of the domiciliary visits, which the Assembly itself, as it was reminded, had sanctioned; of the imprisonment of the priests, of whom the land should within a few days be cleared altogether: and for these and other services it claimed the recognition of the whole council as the saviour of the country. Manuel, as the legal adviser of the council, added a few words to taunt the Assembly with inconsistency in passing one vote that the council should be dissolved and another

that it had deserved well of France. But no debate followed. Lecroix, the president, affirmed that the very formation of the council had been illegal; and, though a mob was brought down to intimidate the Assembly, demanding leave to enter that it might see what deputies had the courage to vote in the interests of the people and who were its enemies, it adhered to its decree.

It was now a question of obstinacy. It was the last evening of August. The Jacobins by this time had completely organized their plans of massacre. They had engaged bands of assassins at high wages; and they had already opened some old catacombs of vast extent to serve as the graves of their victims.* Every one confined in the prisons of Paris was to be slaughtered; but it was essential to this plan that the council should continue in office, in order that the warrants to admit the assassins to the prisons might be signed by those whose official position the gaolers would be bound to recognise. The massacre was fixed for the 2nd of September, and therefore all that was needed was a respite of forty-eight hours. Robespierre, coward as he was, was aware that the Girondins had even less courage than himself, and in concert with Danton, who knew no fear, resolved to turn the tables on the Assembly, and to retaliate on that body the declaration of Lecroix as to the illegality of the council. Lecroix himself he reserved, as he reserved every one who offended him personally, for future vengeance; the blows which could not be delayed were those which were to strike the Assembly itself and its Girondin orators. He declared that the Assembly, by the very act of recommending the con-

* "History of the Girondins," xxiv. 21.

vocation of a National Convention, had abdicated its functions. And he denounced by name Brissot, whom he designated as the liberticide, with the whole body of Girondins, including even Roland the minister, to whose wife, as we have seen, he had himself once been indebted for protection, as having sold France to the Duke of Brunswick, and having received in advance the price of their treason. However absurd the charge might be, it shook the resolution of those whom it threatened. And when a deputy named Thuriot brought forward in the Assembly a decree which in fact had been framed by Danton himself, and which bore the appearance of a compromise, Gensonné and the whole body of Girondins supported it. Ostensibly it confirmed the decree for the election of a new council, but it declared all the members of the existing one capable of re-election, and continued them in office till the new elections should be concluded. The victory of the Jacobins was complete; and the sole resource left to the Girondins seemed to be to divert the fury of the people from their own fellow citizens, by turning it against the foreign enemies who were pressing forward their advance on Paris. Vergniaud harangued the Assembly, with eloquence unusual even for him, to urge the whole nation to lay aside all internal jealousies, all rivalries and enmities of faction, and to unite against the common foe. He was listened to, he was applauded. But Danton had the art to turn even the enthusiasm which he had excited to his own purposes. He put forth another deputy to move that every one who refused to serve against the enemy, or to deliver up his arms on the demand of the municipal authorities, or to obey any command whatever issued by the executive power, should be punished with

death. And he himself, as minister of justice, warned the Assembly that the tocsin was about to sound from the church towers; the drum of alarm would soon be heard in the streets, the black flag, the token that the country was in danger, would be displayed at the Hôtel de Ville, but that none need tremble save the enemies of the country.

It was Sunday, at noon, the 2nd September, when he made this declaration to the Assembly, and he had scarcely quitted the hall when the sounds of terror which he had announced began to peal over the city. No one, prisoner or freeman, could hear them without a shudder; and, though they knew it not, precautions had already been taken to prevent those who were to perish from making resistance. Their dinner-hour had been anticipated, that their knives might be removed before the work of death began. What writer would willingly dwell on the deeds of horror which now began to be executed? What reader would not turn with disgust from a minute recital of atrocities shocking to humanity and decency, degrading the very name and nature of man? For more than four days gangs of men worse than devils, and of women unsexed by profligacy and cruelty till they had become worse even than the men, gave themselves up to slaughter, deluging the streets with blood, and, where they could spare time, aggravating the pangs of death by superfluous tortures. Many whom the pike or axe of the male ruffians had failed wholly to deprive of life were torn to pieces by the unarmed hands of the women; many before their eyes finally closed saw fragments of their flesh devoured by their murderers, and their own life-blood streaming from the lips of those to whom the very monsters who profited by their crimes presently

denied the title of women, and named the furies of the guillotine. At their head was as usual the implacable Théroigne, terrible above all, whether men or women, from the fiendish ingenuity with which she invented torments for her victims; under her instructions other women were cut slowly to pieces, or stabbed to death with red-hot spears, while she in person instructed the assassins how as long as possible to avoid a vital part. The men, a large portion of whom were the ruffians whom to win the favour of Madame Roland, Barbaroux had brought up from Marseilles, chose for their leader a man named Maillard, already too well known for his share in all preceding outrages. He had originally been a tradesman's clerk, but at the commencement of the Revolution had gladly quitted the shop and devoted himself to murder and pillage. His personal strength and his ferocity were equally remarkable.* He had been foremost in the attack on the Bastille, and his had been the hand which seized the hapless De Launay; a feat of which he was so proud, that he had ever since signed himself "one of the conquerors of the Bastille." He had been equally conspicuous, and still more ferocious, in the attack upon Versailles; and he was now about to stamp his name with a still more ineffaceable infamy; he became the presiding genius of murder. In front of the prison called the Abbey a tribunal was erected where, with a table in front of him, bearing tobacco-pipes and bottles of wine, which were constantly replenished, he sat as judge, with a jury composed of wretches equally sanguinary with himself. Before him was brought each prisoner as he was dragged from his dungeon, and after one or two

* "Histoire de la Terreur," Pièces just., xiv. vol. iii. p. 483.

questions, sometimes without one, he pronounced sentence. He had more than one form of condemnation; sometimes he waved his hand, "To La Force (the name of one of the other prisons) with this gentleman;" "Set this person free." But however varied might be the form of expression, the assassins who were standing by knew that the purport of each was the same. He had scarcely finished speaking when sword or hatchet was raised, pike levelled, and every weapon was plunged into the body of the victim. For none fell by a single wound; there was a crowd of executioners, each discontented if he had not a share in the death of each prisoner. If they were weary, casks of wine were at hand to refresh their strength; they drank, and returned with increased eagerness to the shambles, drunkenness gradually lending additional stimulus to their fury; and, as fatigue began to weaken their blows, or mere satiety of blood disposed them to let some destined sufferer escape, the Jacobin leaders would revive their slackening zeal with promise of augmented pay. Some insisted on their wages being estimated by the number they had slain with their own hands; and, when they had collected a sufficient pile of heads, carried them to Pétion to obtain from him a certificate for payment, and cups of choicer wine which he poured out for them with his own hands. Similar tribunals, under judges whose names have been overshadowed by Maillard's greater notoriety, were erected in front of the other prisons; and at each the same bloody scenes were enacted night and day; while, to increase the horror, rows of seats were erected for spectators, which were chiefly occupied by women, who sat and worked or chatted, as they looked on; sometimes laughing aloud if the agony of any victim, mangled

with more than ordinary mutilation, drove him into some strange writhing, some shriek of more intense horror; or applauding some blow given by an assassin of especial dexterity, as complacently as if they had been in a theatre: while on the ground in front their little children were sporting in the gutter, daubing each other with the blood that flowed down in streams, and making playthings of the severed limbs which lay strewed about in promiscuous and unheeded masses. Yet the murderers were but a few hundred ruffians; the citizens of Paris, who heard with shuddering and trembling what was taking place, were half a million; fifty thousand of them were national guards actually under arms; of whom not one had virtue and courage enough to rouse his fellows to defend innocent men from a fate which at any moment might become their own. The wickedness of the murderers, unexampled in the history of the world as it was, is hardly stranger or more appalling than the apathy of the citizens in general.*

Most indifferent and remiss of all was the body which, as claiming to be the representative of the whole nation, was bound to exert itself for the general safety. From the municipal council, though more especially charged with the duty of watching over the tranquillity of the city, nothing was to be expected, because in it the very plotters and contrivers of the massacres were sitting; but the Assembly was not only free from any such complicity in the crime, but contained members who might, without any excess of timidity, have thought themselves in danger; for the quarrel between the Girondins and the party of Robespierre

* Louvet, in his speech against Robespierre ("Terreur," iv. 310,) affirms that the assassins were not 200, and the spectators not 400.

was no longer disguised. Roland had even been included by him in the original list of proscriptions, but had been saved by Danton on the ground of being his colleague in the ministry. Yet it was not till late on the night of the 3rd that the Assembly condescended to take the slightest notice of the crimes that were being committed, it might almost be said, at its very doors; and even then it contented itself with ordering a deputation of its members to visit the prisons the next morning, to speak to the people, and thus to restore tranquillity; and selected for the mission some of the most furious Jacobins, with Chabot at their head. Still more ostentatiously lukewarm were the ministers. From Danton, of course, no measures could be expected to repress the fury of the murderers whom he himself had hired. But Roland, as minister of the interior, was, by the duty of his department, even more bound than he to repress all disorders, and his zeal might have been expected to be sharpened by the danger which had threatened himself. Yet, if the Assembly did nothing, he did less than nothing. He addressed, indeed, to the Assembly a letter full of bombastic eulogies of himself and his services since his first assumption of office, containing also a gentle complaint of the municipal council as having overstepped the lawful limits of its action; but qualifying even that mild reproof by a description of the work of the day before as one to which the people, terrible in its vengeance, had, nevertheless, brought a sort of justice; and then entertained a large party of those deputies and members of the council who were most deeply implicated in these atrocities at a splendid dinner, where the massacres formed the chief subject of conversation, and, in some instances, of warm panegyric; and where the only question which he himself raised on the

subject was whether it was by his department that the payment for the refreshments which had been supplied to the murderers was to be furnished.*

To enumerate all who perished in this, as yet the most shameful week of modern history, would be impossible, even were it not needless and painful. Yet one or two victims, from their previous celebrity or from the notorious innocence and purity of their lives, deserve particular mention. The first to perish were the priests; they formed an entire class, to belong to which was of itself a sufficient evidence of guilt. Two hundred of them were imprisoned in a Carmelite convent which had lately been turned into a gaol. Foremost in virtue as in rank was the Archbishop of Arles, a prelate who had passed a long life in the exercise of a most ungrudging charity and beneficence, which, till the revolution broke out, had been repaid by the affectionate admiration of his whole flock. Those virtues which had given notoriety to his name, were now a passport to the grave. As the whole company were dragged into the court-yard, one of the Marseillese sprang forward: "Which is the Archbishop of Arles?" The old man avowed himself. "You, then," said the ruffian, "are the slayer of the patriots of Arles." "Never," was the meek reply, "did I in my life injure, or shed the blood of any human being." "No matter for that; I will shed yours;" and at these words, he cut him down, and hewed him in pieces with reiterated blows; and his death was the signal for the slaughter of all his brethren. M. Montmorin, whose acquittal by the revolutionary tribunal has been already mentioned, had not, however, been released. On the plea that

* "Appel à l'impartiale postérité," par Madame Roland, i. 71.

matter for fresh accusation of him was sure to be found hereafter, he had been remanded to prison; and now he was brought before judges who required no accusation whatever, and who had been specially enjoined to show him no mercy. Maillard conceived that he should gratify his employers if he aggravated the murder of this faithful minister and honest friend of his king with insolent mockery. As Montmorin's cell had been at the back of the prison, he remained in ignorance of what was being enacted in front of it, till he was summoned into Maillard's presence. He knew not of what he was to be accused; but he believed that, as before, he was to have a formal trial, and with calm dignity he denied the competence of such a tribunal to investigate his conduct. "The gentleman is no doubt right," said one of Maillard's assessors; "and since he is out of our jurisdiction, I recommend that he be transferred to La Force." "To La Force," was Maillard's sentence. Montmorin, ignorant of his meaning, requested that, as became his rank, a carriage might be provided for his removal. "Certainly," said Maillard; "you shall have a carriage." He asked, too, for a few things of which he had need, for his clothes and his watch. He was assured that they should be sent after him. He passed on quietly and confidently towards the street; and even before he reached it, fell dead beneath the blows of those who were waiting for him, and who vied with one another who could show the most effective enmity to the king's friend. The next on the list was Thierry; his offence was that he had been the king's body-servant. "As was the master, so was the valet," said the judge; and that was a sufficient condemnation. He was struck down on the still warm corpse of the minister, and butchered, like him, with repeated

stabs. There were those who would have dealt with Louis himself as with his servants. Some of the ruffians proposed to break into the Temple; and a division of the deputies who had been sent to restore tranquillity, made a report to the Assembly, that "to resist them would be impolitic and dangerous, perhaps unjust."* But the Assembly took a different view of the policy of saving the king for the time. The Prussians were believed to be advancing rapidly, and, while to allow the king's murder would only exasperate them, the preservation of him, as a living hostage, might afford a means of compelling their retreat. He was spared for the present; and a tricolour riband was drawn round the walls of his prison, the barrier, as the deputy Lacroix described it, "of reason, liberty, and equality, which the people never transgressed."

With each outbreak the murderers, who were now the masters of Paris, grew more savage. On the 10th of August Madame de Campan had been spared because they did not kill women. But sex was no longer a protection. The Princess de Lamballe had been the most brilliant ornament of the court, equally pre-eminent in virtue as in beauty and every feminine grace and accomplishment. She was also the dearest friend of Marie Antoinette. In the course of the summer she had quitted Paris for a visit to the country; and the queen had written to her to beg her to remain there, since her return to Paris would but endanger herself, without being of any effectual service. But she, like her royal mistress, thought less of herself than of her friend. She believed that her presence would comfort her, and knew that she needed

* "Histoire de la Terreur," iii. 271, 301.

comfort. She hastened back to the Tuilleries cheerfully; and followed the queen to the dreary prison of the Temple; but after a day or two, as we have seen, the royal family were denied the solace of the company of those who were still faithful to them; and the princess, with several other faithful royalists, was removed and thrown into a dungeon in La Force. She was specially marked out in the proscription list, some said by the interest of the Duke d'Orleans, who was her brother-in-law, and who desired to augment his wealth by her inheritance, for she was very rich. The chief judge at the gate of La Force was the detestable Hebert; and she now was summoned before him with her fate already determined, for the men who summoned her from her cell announced to her that she was to be transferred to the Abbey, an expression which at La Force was the sentence of death. She too was to be mocked as well as murdered. "Swear," said Hebert, "devotion to liberty and the nation, and hatred to the king and queen and the throne, and you shall live." "I will take the first oath," replied the princess, "but the second, never. It is not in my heart. The king and queen I have ever loved and honoured." Almost before she had finished speaking, she was pushed into the gateway. One ruffian struck her from behind with his sabre. They tore her to pieces. The queen's letter fell from her hair in which she had hidden it. The sight of it redoubled their fury. They stuck her head on a pike, and carried it in triumph to the Palais Royal to display it to D'Orleans, who was feasting with some of the companions of his daily orgies; and then proceeded to the Temple to brandish it in the face of the queen. They held it up in sight of the royal apartments, and a deputy of the Assembly, who was in the

room, tried to trick Marie Antoinette into going to the window. Louis, however, who on hearing the shouts of the mob, had himself looked out and had seen what was being done, drew her back, and saved her from the agony of the spectacle; but he could not long keep her in ignorance of her friend's fate, which impressed upon them all more strongly than ever the conviction that their own destruction was equally resolved on.

There were some few exceptions to the general massacre. The judges had been instructed to spare a few, apparently in order to give their condemnation of the rest some appearance of the impartiality of a judicial proceeding. Here and there, too, the friends of a prisoner found means of bribing them; or occasional paroxysms of compunction touched those engaged in the work of blood. One murderer recognised d'Epresménil as he was about to slay him, and, remembering obligations which he had received from him, put a sword into his hand, and, giving him a part of his own blood-stained garments, by this terrible disguise enabled him to escape. Manuel, the chief legal officer of the council, though he scrupled not to give the murders at the Abbey his personal countenance,* was less hardened than his fellows, or it may be supposed too that he had some secret partiality for the king, since he afterwards refused to vote for his death. He promised Louis to save two of his attendants, M. Hué and M. de Chamilly, and he kept his word. Others the mob themselves protected, though in some instances their very mercy was more loathsome and brutal than even their cruelty. M. Cazotte, who through all dangers had scorned to con-

* "Histoire de la Terreur," iii. 239.

ceal his attachment to the royal cause, was dragged before Maillard; the words of death were pronounced, but his daughter clung to him with such frantic energy, that the murderers, though their weapons were uplifted, could not strike him without wounding her; they tried to tear her from him; they tried to beat her down; filial affection made her grasp too strong for them; she would die with her father, but she would not be separated from him. The very men who were prepared to slay him urged Maillard to revoke his sentence; and she was permitted to lead him away in safety, with the blessed consciousness that she herself had saved him by her heroic affection. M. de Sombreuil was even more obnoxious than Cazotte to the leaders of the Revolution. As governor of the Hôtel des Invalides he had opposed what resistance he could to their first outrages; and he had throughout been unshaken in his loyalty. The mere mention of his name was sufficient to condemn him; but his daughter too placed herself between him and his assassins. She insisted that the other prisoners had been heard in their defence, and that she would plead for him. The resource which she invoked seemed more hopeless than if she had appealed to Maillard himself, for it was to the women, the furies of the guillotine, that she addressed herself. She reminded them that they too had fathers, and that what she was doing for her parent they would do for theirs. If they had no sympathy with her misery they had respect for her boldness. On this occasion the men were the fiercest. One struck her with his sabre, inflicting a deep gash; but she quailed not, and the rest, with the spectators, cried out to spare her. The judges wavered. One of the assassins took upon himself to decide her fate. He brought her a

glass full of human blood, the life-blood of her father's late companions in captivity. "Drink this," said he, "and swear to be faithful to the nation, and your father shall live." She shuddered, but she drank. And her father too passed alive from the tribunal.

The escape of one prisoner presents a singular instance of the way in which actual weariness of bloodshed for a moment softened not only a single individual but a whole gang of assassins. Bertrand de Moleville, the minister, had fortunately escaped arrest. While the officers of the municipal council were ransacking the whole city with their domiciliary visits, a friendly physician had given him shelter and concealed him till he was able to fly to England. But his younger brother, the Chevalier Bertrand, was confined in the Abbey; and it was easy to suppose that his relationship to the obnoxious minister would be in itself a sufficient proof of his guilt. Luckily he was gifted with an eminent degree of courage and presence of mind, and obeyed the summons to present himself before Maillard with so unruffled a countenance that the man who had been sent for him conceived a fancy to him, and took upon himself to subject him to a preliminary examination. Bertrand affirmed that he had been originally imprisoned by mistake; and the fellow, whose name was Michel, after one or two questions, undertook to save him. When they arrived before Maillard he took his defence upon himself; declared that Bertrand was a foreigner, a Maltese, abused Maillard himself for not knowing Malta was an island, scolded the jury, and, when he saw them hesitate for a moment, took upon himself to pronounce with a stentorian voice that the nation ought to declare Bertrand innocent. The spectators entered into the humour of baulking the judge of the

blood of an aristocrat, and re-echoed his decision. Maillard consented to his acquittal; and Michel, not to do things by halves, called one of his comrades to his aid, and, taking Bertrand between them, they conducted him unhurt into the street. When they heard that he was discharged, the very men who had been on the watch for him to slaughter him seemed rejoiced at his liberation. They threw their arms round his neck, almost stifling him with their blood-stained caresses. But Michel extricated him from their embraces, asked him whither he intended to go, and learning that he proposed to ask a lodging from his sister-in-law, the wife of the minister, who lived in the Rue du Chaume, they begged his permission to accompany him that they might see his reception. He would fain have dispensed with the attention, for the men were covered from head to foot with the gore of other victims whom they had despatched; but they would accept no other recompense; they had already refused his money, which he thrust into their hands, and he was compelled to humour them. The meeting was as affecting as it was joyful, for Madame de Bertrand had given him up for dead. And these men, hardened and ferocious as they were, shed tears of sympathetic joy at witnessing her rapturous welcome of him. They remained a few minutes, continuing to refuse all other reward, and presently courteously thanking them both for the pleasure which they had granted them, they returned to the Abbey to continue their slaughter of others whose countenance or demeanour might be less prepossessing.*

At last, by the evening of the 6th, there was no one left to murder. The prisons no longer contained a

* "Mémoires de Bertrand de Moleville," ii. 213.

single living being but the gaolers. Even the women confined in the house of correction for their sex known as La Salpétrière, were given up to the assassins after having been subjected to the foulest indignities. Paris was again quiet, though the tranquillity was rather the stupefaction of horror than the repose of security. But other cities were beginning to be exposed to the same atrocities that had fallen so heavily on the capital. The infamous municipal council had sent among the departments a circular, countersigned by Danton in his character of minister of justice, announcing "that a frightful plot of the court against the patriots having been discovered, they had been forced to avail themselves of the power of the people to save the country; that they had no doubt but that the departments would agree in sanctioning the measures which they had taken for the public safety; and exhorting them to imitate the example of the metropolis, that, when the men should march to join the army, they might not feel that they were leaving behind them brigands to destroy their wives and children." Many cities rejected the murderous incitation; but at Meaux, at Rheims, at Lyons, the deeds of Maillard and Hebert were too faithfully copied, while Versailles became the scene of a massacre of more noble victims than those consigned to ordinary prisons. Under pretence of setting free for active service against the enemy the troops which were kept in attendance on the high court of Orleans, the municipal council had proposed to bring to Paris the accused persons who had been sent for trial before it, with the evident intention of involving them in the fate of the tenants of the Abbey and La Force. The Assembly decided that it would be sufficient to move them down the Loire to Saumur, where the

castle was too strong to require the aid of any considerable armed force. But the council disregarding its decree, sent down counter-orders; the prisoners, more than fifty in number, were conducted towards Paris, and on the 9th they reached Versailles. Among them were some of the first nobles of the land. The Duke de Brissac, whose crime was having been the commander of the constitutional guard; the Duke de Liancourt, who at the first outbreak of the Revolution had himself been a zealous reformer; De Lessart, with whom, as has already been related, Louis had parted so unwillingly as a minister. On the preceding night, when the news of their approach reached the town, the authorities applied to Danton to provide for their safety. They were dismissed roughly enough with a hint that their application was premature, "it was not yet ascertained what opinion the people would form respecting them." Unable to move him, the magistrates took upon themselves to draw up a proclamation, putting the prisoners when they should arrive under the protection of the people. But it was so much waste paper. A gang of assassins had already been engaged. The escort which had been sent from Paris, under command of an American named Fournier, had been carefully selected for the ferocity of each individual. And, in spite of all the efforts of the mayor, a brave and honest man whose name, Hypolite Richaud, the latest French historians have been proud to preserve from oblivion, the carriages were stopped in the middle of the street; every one of the prisoners was massacred; and so eager for bloodshed were the assassins, that they went on to the Bridewell of the town, forced it, and murdered all they found there, though they were only criminals confined for petty offences.

It may well be imagined how universal a detestation these unexampled crimes awakened throughout Europe. In France itself the predominant feeling excited by them, was that apathy which is born of the extremity of terror; and among their more immediate effects was that of widening and making more notorious the breach between the Jacobins and Girondins. Vergniaud made an use of this feeling in the Assembly which would have been skilful and perhaps successful if he had had courage to back it up with actions. But none of his party had any boldness except in their tongues. The Prussians had taken Verdun, and the citizens, who had as yet no reason for anticipating the brilliancy of military talent and hardihood displayed in the campaign by Dumouriez, were daily expecting to hear of their advance against the city. Yet the fortifications which had been ordered proceeded as languidly as if it were a time of profound peace, and Vergniaud, bringing the subject forward in the Assembly, electrified it with the torrent of his vehement eloquence, while he attributed the languor of the citizens in prosecuting a work so indispensable to the safety of the country, to the panic created by the massacres, which showed every one that the foreign armies were not the worst enemies which they had to dread. They had not, he affirmed, been the work of the people in general, but of a few ruffians, who dishonoured the whole nation; miscreants hired by men who acted as if they supposed that the Revolution had been made solely for them; and that Louis had been sent to the Temple that they might be enthroned at the Tuilleries. In more than one speech he thus denounced the planners of these crimes, and they in their turn were equally vehement in their attacks on him and his party.

adding even threats to their revilings; while Marat openly declared the Girondins as great enemies of the people as the aristocrats, and began to talk of the necessity of purifying the Assembly. The ill-will between the parties was further inflamed by a robbery which was committed in the royal jewel room. Treasures of prodigious value were carried off; the jewels belonging to the Crown, and that celebrated diamond known as the Regent, from having been purchased by the Regent d'Orleans. Roland, as minister of the interior, instituted a rigid investigation into the circumstances, and succeeded in proving that those who had planned and profited by the robbery were prominent members of the Jacobin Club. He even brought one to trial, and obtained his conviction; but the municipal council released him from prison, and his popularity among his brother Jacobins was not diminished by this proof of his dishonesty.

If the Jacobins could have kept the Girondins out of the Convention, the elections to which were now proceeding rapidly, they would in all likelihood have at once proceeded to give the effect to Marat's threats which, as it was, they postponed till the next year. Robespierre rewarded Marat by procuring his election as one of the deputies for Paris, but he could not influence the department from which they derived their name, and the Gironde sent nearly the same men to the Convention that had represented it in the Legislative Assembly. When the elections were completed the numbers of the two parties were nearly equal; what difference there was in that respect being in favour of the Girondins; but no one who had watched the conduct of both could have much doubt to which side the victory would incline.

CHAPTER XLIII.

The 21st of September was the day fixed for the opening of the Convention; a dismal event for the whole nation, and for every class within it. No body of men had ever yet met together who either brought so much misery on their country or so much infamy on themselves. None ever sanctioned such enormous and countless crimes; none ever mingled with their wickedness such imbecile folly. Under its heartless rule proscriptions lasted, not as in the time of the Roman tyrants and triumvirs for a few days or weeks, but for nearly two years. The highest rank, the tenderest age, the female sex in its noblest and purest representatives, were alike its victims; while the short-sighted folly of the leaders is equally demonstrated by the circumstance that, with scarcely an exception, they all perished in the internecine war which, when they had struck down the common object of their hate, they waged with one another. If the Girondins aided the Jacobins to destroy the king, baser in so doing even than their accomplices, since their vote was the offspring of craven fear, they did not save themselves by their vile compliance. They in their turn were crushed by the Jacobins, who gained as little by their victory. If Robespierre destroyed the chief Cordeliers, Danton, and Desmoulins, he too met a fit retribution when he himself fell beneath the

attack of other Cordeliers, Tallien and Frèron; while D'Orleans, who hoped to raise himself above all, and to pave his way to the throne by the death of his innocent kinsman, perished by the united hostility of every faction.

The gradual diminution of the prospects of safety for Louis, whom we may no more call the king, was seen in the arrangement of the Assembly. As in the Legislative Assembly the constitutionalists had occupied the benches on the right, which in the National Assembly had been appropriated to the Royalists, so now the same seats were taken by the Girondins. No longer was there to be found among the deputies a single Royalist who maintained the king's indefeasible right to as much authority as he did not spontaneously resign; nor even a single constitutionalist, who professed adherence to him so long as he walked in the path of the new constitution. Those most favorable to him now were those whose first political object was to strip him of the name as they had already deprived him of the authority of sovereign; but who were disposed to stop there, and not to take his life, provided they could maintain themselves in the contest with their rivals without committing or co-operating in such an atrocity. The Jacobins made no secret of their resolve to destroy him; and though there was between the two a party which called themselves Moderates, their moderation was so evidently the fruit not of any deliberate sagacity, but of cold irresolution, that the more violent

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* "Danton abandoned him; Robespierre affected to fear him; Marat denounced him; Camille Desmoulins pointed him out to the Terrorists; the Girondins accused, and the Montagnards sent him to the scaffold."—"History of the Girondins," xlviii. 7, English translation.

faction could securely count on their votes on any great emergency which made it worth their while to terrify them. Yet the first proceedings of the Assembly showed a preponderance in favour of the Girondins. Pétion, who belonged to their party, was elected the first president. Of the six secretaries, Vergniaud, Condorcet, and Brissot were three; the other three were either Girondins or Moderates; and in all the first conflicts on measures of policy the Jacobin faction was defeated by decisive majorities.

On the first great measure both parties coincided: following, in this instance, the lead of one of the most contemptible members of the whole body, Collot d'Herbois, the strolling player. On the very day of meeting, after a desultory discussion on the question whether, as Tallien proposed, the whole Assembly should take a new oath not to separate till they had given the nation a constitution founded on liberty and equality; or in what other form they should mark their detestation of a king, or of any master, or body of masters, who should aspire to control the sovereignty of the people. Collot, without making any formal speech or motion, cried out, "that without treason to the nation, they could not, for a single moment, delay the proclamation of the abolition of royalty." His proposal was seconded, and, to the disgrace of the church, with savage aggravation, by Gregoire, Bishop of Blois. This unworthy prelate was not ashamed to try and exasperate the Assembly against the life, as well as the authority of the innocent Louis. "It was not," he said, "abstract sovereignty, but the sovereign himself, whom it was needful to punish. Dynasties of kings were only devouring races which lived on human flesh. Kings were in the moral order of things what monsters were in the physical world. Their his-

tory was the martyrology of peoples." It is not waste of time to quote such inhuman and ridiculous rhapsodies. They are as instructive in their way as the most sagacious sayings of the wisest statesmen, and instructive to statesmen themselves; for they show (and no event in the history of the world has been so pregnant with such lessons as the French Revolution) to what atrocities the fanaticism of liberty can reconcile men whom all their previous studies, and their profession itself, must have trained in principles of virtue and humanity. No one before had ventured to speak of the king's death in the Assembly, though it had been a not unfrequent topic in the Jacobin Club; had been the theme of more than one of Marat's libels; and had been, as we have seen, hoped for and suggested by Madame Roland in her private letters, above three years before; and on this occasion no one took any notice of the bishop's sanguinary suggestion. The extinction of the kingly power, of that authority handed down from Charlemagne through a series of successors for a thousand years, illustrated by the statesmanlike energy of Philip Augustus, by the pious valour and enlightened wisdom of St. Louis, by the chivalry of Francis, the magnanimity of Henry, was enough for one day: that was voted by acclamation; and though the Convention never formally established a republic by any distinct and precise decree, the next day it was enacted by implication, and a resolution was passed that a new chronology should commence with this era; and that henceforth every one should date from the establishment of the republic, of which the first year had now opened.

In this matter Girondins and Jacobins had acted in harmony. But other measures the Girondins, as we have already said, carried in spite of the most vehe-

ment Jacobin opposition. And the leaders on each side began to denounce their rivals, and to threaten them with impeachment. Roland had been elected as a deputy to the Convention, but had refused to accept his election, preferring to retain his office as minister of the interior; and in that capacity he brought forward a measure for raising a guard to protect the Convention, which was so obnoxious to the Jacobins that, even after it had been carried, Merlin, whose violence in the last had secured him a seat in the new Assembly, proposed its repeal, arguing that the ultimate object of the establishment of such a force could only be the establishment of a dictatorship or a triumvirate. Cunningly as the expression was adapted to create a prejudice, it had no power over the Convention. The guard, according to Roland's original proposal, was to be levied in every department; and in this second debate the Girondins did not hesitate to avow that their object was to lower the preponderating influence of Paris, without apparently losing a single vote by their frankness. Some speakers even turned Merlin's argument against himself; agreeing indeed that there was a design to establish a dictator, but affirming that it was not one of their party who cherished it; and a man named Rebecqui, hitherto chiefly known as a friend of Barbaroux, but beginning to attract notice by the fearlessness of his language, denounced Robespierre by name as the man who was plotting to obtain such power. Merlin was defeated by a great majority; and when Buzot, almost at the same time, proposed the appointment of a commission whose duty it should be to enquire into the state of the republic and of the city of Paris, and to frame a law against those who prompted murder and assassination, though this resolution was avowedly aimed at the authors of the Sep-

tember massacres, the Jacobins did not venture to go to a division against it, but allowed the commission to be appointed and the commissioners to be nominated by their adversaries.

Yet so incurably weak in conduct was the whole Girondin party, that they did not venture to act upon the resolutions which they had fought so hard and so successfully to carry. They took no steps to levy the force which the Convention had sanctioned; and this negligent inconsistency, to give it no harsher name, was a greater encouragement to their enemies than their defeat in the original contest would have been. It seemed almost as if they were intentionally giving the Jacobins time to wrest the victory from them after they had gained it. And the Jacobins were not slack to avail themselves of the opportunity, but began to organize petitions against the guard even after it had been twice sanctioned. There was in the municipal council a man named Chaumette, the son of a shoemaker, who had become a member of the Jacobin Club, and was seeking to raise himself into notice by the violence of his language and conduct; though it was remarked of him, as since his day it has been remarked of demagogues in other countries, that the character of his oratory was greatly influenced by that of his audience.* It is a singular specimen of the effrontery of argument which his party permitted themselves, that at a time when the whole body of citizens was crouching in helpless terror and bewilderment beneath the blows which had just been so fearfully dealt them, he could venture to affirm that there was no such thing as agitation and disturbance. "The

* "Autant il était audacieux et insolent lorsqu'il se trouvait dans son milieu habituel, en presence d'un auditoire dont il avait toutes les sympathies, autant il est souple et obséquieux lorsqu'il est vis-à-vis de la réprésentation nationale."—"Histoire de la Terreur," iv. 283.

names agitators and disturbers had been invented* by the aristocrats solely to found on them a pretext for the creation of this force, which was intended to be employed against the republic." A petition based on these allegations was presented to the Convention by a body of above fifty delegates, including a deputation from the town council, which behaved with such insolence at the bar that one Girondin member demanded the immediate application of the law against riots; while the galleries, which had been carefully packed for the discussion, were so uproarious and violent in their support of both the speaker and the petitioners that Guadet, who was the president, threatened to clear them. Such a measure had never yet been adopted; but every successive incident, even when it gave a victory in words or appearance to the Girondins, from their utter want of energy and sagacity to improve it led to a practical triumph of the Jacobins. The threat of clearing the galleries silenced the spectators for a moment. But the Jacobins retaliated by a proposal to repeal the decree of martial law. The galleries were as furious as ever; the threat to clear them was not repeated; and the repeal was carried. The Girondins prevailed to forbid the printing of the petition the presentation of which had been so offensive; but the council in open defiance of the resolution printed and circulated it in the departments, forging the mayor's countersign to the packets to secure their instant transmission: and had even the audacity to threaten Roland with impeachment for exerting his authority as minister to detain a number of them at the post-office. The Girondins even contrived by their mismanagement to create an appearance of disunion in

* On a créé les mots *agitateurs* et *perturbateurs*.—Hist. de la Ter. iv. 248.

their own councils. For when Barbaroux, the most unscrupulous and ferocious of their whole body, exasperated at the insolence of the municipal council, brought forward a series of resolutions which culminated in its abolition, not one of his usual coadjutors supported it; not because they disapproved of it, but because they were as much taken by surprise as the Jacobins. He had not given them notice of a step which a very little deliberation would have united them in supporting, and which was lost solely from their want of penetration to discern its consequences, and consequently of firmness to carry it.

The Jacobins were, in fact, more divided than the Girondins. Danton despised Marat; Robespierre was suspicious and envious of Danton. But, though eventually these mutual jealousies led to the destruction of them all, for the present they exhaled in expressions of disdain and secret murmurs; and whenever any deed of violence was to be done, the leaders acted with a co-operation as zealous as if no undercurrent of ill-feeling embittered their minds against one another. As yet, too, they had all the instinct of a common self-defence, and combined firmly to repel any attack made on any of their body from without. And such attacks were not wanting. At the end of October Paris was alarmed by intelligence of fresh tumults having taken place in the provinces. At Lyons a gang of furious ruffians had set up the guillotine in the great square, had forced open the prisons, and, repeating the atrocities of September on a smaller scale, had put to death numbers of innocent persons. While on the opposite side of the kingdom, in the hitherto peaceful province of La Vendée, an insurrection, the more formidable that it was sullied by no such atrocities, had broken out. The people of that

district had retained much of the primitive simplicity of an earlier age. They were strongly attached to their landlords, who lived among them almost entirely; to the religion of their forefathers; and to their king, both in his person and his authority; they had heard with horror of the massacre of the priests, and of the captivity of their sovereign and his family; and they rose in great force, seized one or two towns, and attacked the national guard. By them they were repulsed, not without loss. But they were undismayed, and only retired to seek the guidance of more experienced leaders. They easily found them, for the nobles of the district were animated with the same spirit. But the heroic contest which for many months they maintained against the bloody tyrants of the capital belongs to the history of the next year. And their first rising has only been mentioned in this chapter, because of the momentary courage which it imparted to the Girondins, emboldening them to fresh exertions against the Jacobins, which, as usual, they had not vigour enough to render effectual. Roland, as minister of the interior, had been charged by the Convention with the task of drawing up a report on the state and position of the public authorities since the 10th of August, and of the obstacles interposed in any quarter to the full execution of the laws, and in the last days of October he laid it on the table of the Assembly. It was in itself damaging in the highest degree to the council which professed to govern the metropolis, since it described the city as a prey to plunder, anarchy, and confusion of every kind. Neither private nor public property was safe; thieves plundered the one, officials embezzled the other; life was not more secure than property. Men usurped authority which no one had conferred on them, indeed

which no law had created; while neither to usurped nor to lawful authority did any one pay obedience. Roland appended to his report a number of documents, some of which contained express denunciations of the Jacobins and of their leader Robespierre, and alleged that they were seeking to establish a dictatorship: that one of their party, Fournier, the American (for Klootz was not the only foreigner, who, in the present confusion of all things, was allowed an influence on the policy of the nation), had openly proclaimed their resolution to get rid of the Girondin cabal, and their conviction that Robespierre was the only man who could save the country; and charged them with creating the disorder which was overwhelming the State in order to find in it a pretext for raising him to absolute power.

No uproar that had yet been witnessed in any one of the three Assemblies equalled that which was excited by the reading of this report, and by the motion which was made, as a matter of course, that it should be printed and sent to the different departments; Robespierre rushed to the tribune, insisted on replying to the insinuations, as he called them, which had been made against his character in the papers annexed to the minister's report; and insulted the president, who happened to be Guadet, and who endeavoured to confine him, according to the rules of the Assembly, to the discussion of the bare question whether the report should be published. It must be admitted that, according to the rules of our Parliament and of common fairness, a member personally attacked, as he undoubtedly had been, would have been allowed such an opportunity of defending himself, and that a consideration of the documents presented along with the report as a portion of the evidence on which it was

founded would not seem to an English speaker foreign to the question of publication of the report itself. But such was not the practice of the French Assembly. Guadet, with the evident approbation of the majority, ruled that Robespierre was out of order; and he and Danton, who came to his support with as much ardour as if they were divided by no differences or mutual distrust, in vain endeavoured to overbear the President by violence of language and demeanour. The Girondins came to his support, and one of them, Louvet, little known before except as the author of the Adventures of Faublas, a novel so licentious as even in such times to have earned a conspicuous infamy, but bound by ties of the closest intimacy with Madame Roland, stood forward to do battle for her husband's report, documents and all, and offered himself as the accuser of Robespierre. The Convention was with him. Robespierre could not obtain even an adjournment, and Louvet at once proceeded in a speech not more distinguished for its vehemence than for its power of argument to denounce both him and Marat, and the whole Jacobin faction. For both the latter he had nothing but contempt. He affirmed that the whole Jacobin party within the Convention did not amount to more than seven or eight members, who were guilty of the greatest insolence in combating, as they did, a hundred times their number. Of Marat, his language was still more scornful; he declared that the Convention owed the whole nation an explanation why it tolerated in its bosom a wretch whom public opinion regarded with horror. But Robespierre could not be dismissed so briefly. As in first approaching the question of his conduct Louvet spoke in general terms of factions and anarchists, Danton fancied his courage was wavering, and insisted on greater precision. "I

will be more precise," replied Louvet, "I will put my finger on the evil;" and he named Robespierre as a man pretending to identify himself with the people as all usurpers had done from Cæsar to Cromwell, from Sylla to Masaniello, only in order to obtain power to trample on the rights of the people, and to render himself its master. It throws a light on the atrocities of the 10th of August, and shows that in fact the Girondins were little better than the Jacobins, and that the strife between them was kindled by no antagonism of principle, but by the mere rivalry of personal ambition, that the speaker claimed credit for his own friends as the exclusive originators of the insurrection of that day, and founded his bitterest reproaches of Robespierre on the circumstance of his having had no connexion with it, though, as usual, he had tried to appropriate the credit of it. But at the same time Louvet disowned all participation in the September massacres, and charged them wholly and entirely on Robespierre and the Jacobins. They were those who had planned them, they were those who had executed them, and who had previously reduced the Legislative Assembly to such a pitch of impotence that it could neither prevent, nor check, nor chastise them.

Other Girondins supported his arguments with evidence derived from their personal knowledge; one, Lacroix, who had been president of the Assembly in the last weeks of August, affirming that on one occasion Robespierre had declared to himself that, if the Assembly did not pass with a good grace some resolutions which he had proposed, he would reduce it to compliance by the tocsin; that he had reported this threat to the Assembly, and before the close of the sitting had been warned that Robespierre in revenge had posted men on the road by which he usually re-

turned home to assassinate him. That Marat, whom he had already branded as the disgrace of the Convention, was a member of it, was, Louvet affirmed, the work of Robespierre alone; and he summed up his speech, his philippic as some of his admiring hearers proclaimed it, by an address to the object of his denunciations:

"Yes, Robespierre, I accuse you of having long persistently calumniated the purest patriots; and of having calumniated them with especial fury on those days of September when calumny was proscription.

"I accuse you of having, as far as lay in your power, misinterpreted, persecuted, and degraded the representatives of this nation; and of having made others misinterpret, persecute, and degrade them too.

"I accuse you of being constantly brought forward by your partisans as an object of idolatry; of having allowed them in your presence to pronounce you the only virtuous man in France, the only man who could save the country; and of having twenty times intimated the same opinion yourself.

"I accuse you of having tyrannized over the Electoral Assembly of Paris by every means of intrigue and intimidation.

"I accuse you of having plainly aimed at supreme power."*

He demanded accordingly an instant investigation of Robespierre's conduct; and for the moment all that he who was thus impeached could obtain from his brother members was the grant of some delay while these charges of Louvet were examined, and

* The peroration is given by M. Ternaux, from whom I have translated it, and who also quotes many other sentences and paragraphs of the speech

a promise that he should eventually be allowed to reply to them. And the aversion which the Convention showed for him continued daily to increase. It was to no purpose that the Jacobin Club rang with threats of vengeance against the Girondins, whom they called their persecutors, and expelled Louvet from their body. The Fédérés from the different departments declared unanimously against them; and when, a short time afterwards, Marat ventured to rise in the Convention, and, repeating his vile demand for blood, which Louvet had denounced, to affirm that tranquillity could not be restored to Paris till 270,000 heads had fallen, the whole Assembly rose in horror and drove him from the hall with execrations.

Yet, strongly and plainly as was the feeling of the Convention thus declared, the Girondins, with incredible mismanagement, allowed the advantage which they had gained to be wrested from their hands. On the 5th of November, when Robespierre was to reply to Louvet's charges, the president's chair was filled by Hérault de Sechelles, a vain and unscrupulous man, who, originally belonging to the neutral party, had shrewdness enough to perceive which of the two contending factions would eventually be victorious, and had consequently at last cast in his lot with the Jacobins. The galleries, which had been carefully packed by Santerre and Legendre, were enthusiastic in their applause of Robespierre's defence, and still more noisy in the yells with which they drowned Louvet's attempt to reply; and, taking advantage of the tumult, the president put the question while half the Assembly was ignorant what was being done, and declared that the order of the day was carried, or

in other words that the charges against Robespierre were rejected.

The Jacobins were triumphant, and prepared to take their revenge; but before striking at the Girondins they resolved to complete the destruction of the king, lest Vergniaud and his party, though willing enough at the moment to destroy him, should hereafter see his value as a weapon of political defence, and endeavour to save him: and the ill-fortune of Louis, combined with a fresh blunder of Roland, aggravated the hostility of the whole Girondin party to him, to protect themselves from the imputation of bad faith. A workman named Gamain, whom Louis had been in the habit of employing as his assistant, brought information to Roland, as minister of the interior, that a few months before he had aided the king, whose skill as a smith has been already mentioned, in the construction of an iron safe, and in concealing it in the wall of one of the royal apartments at the Tuilleries; and he further declared that he had seen him deposit in it a number of papers. It was afterwards said that Gamain, who had lately been taken ill, had adopted the crazy suspicion that his illness was the result of a slow poison which Louis had administered to him in a glass of water, and had given this information out of revenge. The minister, delighted at the importance which he expected to derive from thus procuring evidence against the king of which no one else suspected the existence, bade Gamain at once conduct him to the spot where the chest was hidden. A safe was found in the spot which he had indicated, and it contained a number of papers, which Roland first examined by himself, and then carried down with great parade to the Convention. In reality they were

of no great importance, nor such as, even in the eyes of the Jacobins themselves, could have afforded any fresh ground for accusing the king. They were chiefly letters which had passed between the court and Mirabeau, or which had been received from avowed adherents of the crown. One document seemed to prove that the leaders of the Girondins, especially Vergniaud, Guadet, and Gensonné, had been in communication with the king (to whom indeed we have already seen that they had been willing to sell themselves if he could have paid their price), and one or two were papers drawn up by Louis himself, expressive of his doubts as to the policy or even the lawfulness of measures to which his consent had been extorted. One afforded a remarkable proof of the inflexible bigotry of the Roman Catholic church; for it was the reply, which has been already mentioned, made by the bishops to a question which he had addressed to them asking whether, after having accepted against his will and with the hope of being some day able to repeal it, the civil constitution of the clergy, he might be admitted to the sacraments of the church. Making no account of his difficulties, or, it is not too much to say, of the absolute compulsion under which he had acted, they reproved him severely for his concessions to the revolutionary party, and forbade him to approach the altar till he had expiated his weakness by a long series of good works.*

* "History of the Girondins," xxxiii. 15–19: "It will be seen presently, that in his examination at the bar of the Convention, Louis positively denied all knowledge of this safe, and the French historians in general, convinced of the genuineness of the papers, and also of the king's truthfulness, have explained the denial as a mere plea of Not Guilty, to throw the burden of proof on his accusers. This, however, was not his conduct on other points of far greater importance. Yet, if the concealment of the safe was, as some conceived, a trick of the Jacobins to bring odium on

No document in the whole chest afforded the slightest ground to question the good faith of Louis, or the sincerity of his adherence to the general principles of the new constitution. But the failure to find in it any additional evidence against the king only exasperated the Jacobins, and some of them even charged Roland with having removed papers of a more damaging character before he produced the rest to the Convention. As among those which he produced one showed that Louis had had some reason to believe that he might have secured the support of the Girondins by restoring Roland and his two colleagues to office, the accusation was in the highest degree improbable; but it terrified the whole party, and to secure their own safety they began to show as great eagerness as the fiercest Jacobins for the king's destruction. They recognised the maxim proclaimed by Danton that "the only law was to triumph,"* and henceforth discarded every scruple which some of them had professed to entertain, and rivalled the Jacobins in their zeal for bringing Louis to trial, avowing their resolution that the only end of the trial should be condemnation.

The proposal to impeach the king had been formally agitated almost from the first meeting of the Convention; and though one or two members hinted an inclination to the maxim that the person of the king was inviolable, they lacked the courage to main-

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their rivals, it seems strange that they should have made no more use of the paper seeming to criminate them, nor have introduced any more injurious to the king. Whoever put them in the safe, it seems certain that the bulk at least of the papers were genuine documents.

* "History of the Girondins," xxxi. 31. "Barbaroux, in order to divert the suspicions which were excited against Roland, demanded that Louis XVI. should be the first accused."—Ibid. xxxiii. 16. "The price of the head of Louis was the dictatorship."—Ibid. xxxi. 23.

tain it openly. On the other hand the Convention had directed its committee of legislation to investigate the king's conduct; the municipal council had appointed another committee to perform the same task; and the first week in November both committees presented their report. They were alike in spirit, and rivalled one another in violence and absurdity. The circumstance that the Princess Elizabeth had given the Count de Provence some diamonds was alleged as a proof that the whole race of Capet (as the king was called since his dethronement) was conspiring against the country. Louis himself was charged with having spent the national treasures on his journey to Varennes, and even with trying, as a monopolist, to starve the people by hoarding up corn and sugar and coffee; (for the distress in Paris was at this time very great, and the feeling of insecurity was so universal that many of the merchants who had stores of provisions feared to bring them to market); and in more general terms he was denounced as a public functionary who had neglected or betrayed his duty; as a traitor, an oppressor, a brigand, and as deserving the punishment enacted by the laws for such criminals.* And the reports had hardly been presented when a demand was founded on them that there should be no delay in proceeding to trial, lest a natural death should rob them of their victim, for the damp and confined air of the Temple had begun to produce its effect on the naturally strong health of the prisoners, and it was known that both Louis and Marie Antoinette had

* "Le peuple Français n'a-t-il pas le droit impérissable d'appeler Louis XVI. devant leur tribunal, et de lui faire sentir la peine des oppresseurs et brigands?"—Report of the Committee of Legislation, presented by Mailhé. "La Terreur," v. 176.

been ill. That trial was only meant to end in execution was avowed by almost all who clamoured for it; but for some of the deputies the very swiftest trial was too slow, and Robespierre, Legendre, St. Just, and Jean Bon St. André insisted that there was no need of any formal process; that the whole people had condemned the king on the 10th of August, and that the plain duty of the Convention was to order his immediate execution "in prosecution of the right of insurrection."* St. Just particularly opposed the proposal to bring Louis to trial as king, since such an act would be in itself a recognition of kingly power; while Robespierre replied to those who urged that the constitution declared him inviolable, and at least provided that all criminals should have a fair trial, that every step which had for some time been adopted towards Louis was in violation of the constitution; that the whole Convention was condemned by the constitution, and that, if its provisions were to be the rule, nothing was left for the deputies but to throw themselves at Louis's feet and appeal to his clemency for pardon. The good sense of the people, he affirmed, was determined on his death, and by what right could the Convention claim to have a will or an opinion at variance with theirs.† But even these personal arguments, as they may almost be called, could not bring the rest of the Convention to an act of such undisguised atrocity. A large party were

* "La Terreur," i. 263; Dr. Moore's Journal, ii. 495. The Doctor was present at most of the debates which took place at this time.

† A petition of the sections urged "La morte ne peut-elle pas vous soustraire votre victime? Alors que nous serviraient tous vos serments? L'ignorance et la calomnie répandraient impunément le bruit que les Français n'ont pas osé juger leur roi; et qu'ils ont lâchement préféré l'empoisonner."—Ib. 116.

sincerely resolved to save Louis if it should be in their power. Vergniaud broke their effect by a speech of great power, which itself is his condemnation, when it is seen that he had not the courage to act up to the principles which he laid down. He denounced with eloquent indignation the idea of the deputies regulating their votes by the will of the ignorant and excited populace; he showed by the most convincing arguments drawn both from foreign countries and from the condition of France herself, that the death of Louis would not only involve the country in war, but would throw it into such a state of disorder as would render it unable to prosecute war with any probability of success. With the somewhat pedantic reference to Roman history which was the fashion of the time he reminded or informed the deputies that "a Cambrian soldier entered the prison of Marius to slay him, but, terrified at his aspect, fled without daring to harm him. If this soldier had been a senator would he have hesitated to vote for the death of the tyrant? And what courage could be shown by the deputies in giving a vote of which even a coward is capable?"* Yet not two months afterwards this wretched man committed the very act which he now rightly branded as one of both folly and cowardice, and as injurious to the best interests of the country. Others in the Assembly who had no scruples about putting him to death on other grounds, and who were not unwilling to provoke war with foreign nations, still doubted the policy of condemnation, and thought it more in the interests of the permanence of the Republic to expel him and his whole race. Charles I., one deputy

* "History of the Girondins," xxiii. 25.

argued, had had successors; the Tarquins had had none:* and for a moment the observation made a great impression on the Assembly. But this, as every other consideration tending to mercy, was finally overruled by the violence of the Jacobins, who though comparatively few in number, domineered over the cowardice and indecision of the Girondins, and compelled them to vote with them; the two factions united being just sufficient to outnumber the Moderate party, who were resolved at all events to do their best to save the king.

Yet even while thus submitting to be driven to a measure which some of them at least regarded with aversion,† the Girondins were not left without proof that their opinions were shared by a great majority not only of the deputies, but also of the citizens; and that, if they could but summon courage for a single day to put forth the power which they manifestly possessed, they would be able finally to overthrow their enemies, and to appropriate the whole authority of the State to themselves. Pétion's period of mayoralty had expired, and the election of his successor was naturally a trial of strength between the two parties. The Jacobins exerted all their influence to procure the election of D'Huillier, a member of their club, but they could not procure for him four thousand votes, while more than twice that number were given for Chambon, the candidate of the Girondin and Moderate party. Yet this decisive proof that in putting a period to the

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* "History of the Girondins," 150.

† Though the Girondins, almost without exception, voted for the death of Louis in the first instance, several of them, including Guadet and Gensonné, voted subsequently for the respite intended to give time for an appeal to the whole nation.

violence of the Jacobins they would be supported by the people out of doors, could not animate with ordinary resolution a single Girondin deputy. Ambitious as they all were, unscrupulous as they all were, not one among them had either statesmanlike sagacity or manly courage sufficient even to put forth their hand to seize the power which they coveted and which was, as it were, waiting for them.

Before the close of November, therefore, it was decided that the king was to be brought to trial, and, as those who were resolved on his destruction feared to trust the ordinary judges, that the Convention itself should be the tribunal to decide on his fate. The disgrace of having brought forward the motion which determined the point belongs to Pétion. Robespierre made one more effort to procure the king's instant execution; and Merlin of Thionville had the effrontery to affirm that the one thing which he regretted was that, while the tyrant was sitting in the reporters' box on the 10th of August, he had not imitated Brutus and plunged a dagger into his heart. But they were once more defeated. A committee was appointed to arrange the details of the trial, which settled that the Convention should sit for the purpose six hours each day till it was terminated; and, when this was settled, another committee was entrusted with the task of drawing up the bill of indictment. It was an elaborate document, consisting of no fewer than fifty-seven articles; but at last it was completed. And on the 11th of December, Louis, who had been kept in entire ignorance of what was taking place, was visited by the mayor, who announced to him that he was come to conduct him to the Convention, in accordance with a decree which one of the secretaries by whom he was attended proceeded to read. With what its framers conceived to be a precision of anti-

quarian genealogy strangely out of place in a body which so studiously repudiated all family honours and recollections, it termed the king Louis Capet. "Capet," said he, "is not my name; it was that of one of my ancestors." But he expressed his willingness to attend the mayor as he desired; explaining, however, at the same time, that in so doing he recognised no right in the Convention to require his obedience, but only its power to compel his compliance. When he reached the gate where Chambon's carriage was waiting, and afterwards as he passed along the Boulevards and different streets, he could not restrain his surprise at the unusual aspect the city presented. Those who professed to be but carrying out the will of the people were well aware how small a number really bore ill-will to their innocent and benevolent prince, with what horror the citizens in general regarded the idea of destroying him. And to prevent any attempt to rescue him, not only was the carriage accompanied by an escort of several hundred troops, and six cannons, but they had lined the road from the Temple with troops of all kinds ready for action, with infantry, cavalry, more cannon; and had posted similar forces at different points best calculated to command and overawe the city, in such numbers that* it was reckoned that nearly 100,000 men were on this day under arms.

The hall of the Convention had been filled from an early hour; the galleries, too, had been carefully packed by the Jacobins; and, while the mayor was gone to the Temple, some of the more furious of that party endeavoured further to exasperate the deputies against the king by the lowest abuse. His exploit at Varennes had earned Drouet a seat among them, and

* Moore's Journal, ii. 507.

he now revived the subject of the king's flight, heaping on him the epithets of cheat, villain, traitor, monster,* till he disgusted even his audience. A deputy named Barrère, than whom in the dark days of terror which ensued upon the king's death few showed more cruelty or more baseness in providing the guillotine with its daily victims, was the president. And when at last it was announced that the king had arrived, and was in the antechamber, having reminded the deputies that he had decided that he was to be received in profound silence, he ordered him to be ushered in.

It was a solemn moment when Louis entered. It was the only assembly which he had not opened in person; and to many of the deputies his face was previously unknown. Yet few even of those most resolved on his destruction were so hardened as to feel no emotion at seeing him to whom in their earlier days all had acknowledged a willing allegiance as the most patriotic and humane of sovereigns, thus advancing to meet his doom at their hands. Of the spectators many could not restrain their tears; but Louis himself gave no indication of sharing the feelings which his appearance in such a body on such an occasion excited. No fear nor even anxiety disturbed his demeanour or ruffled his countenance. Never perhaps in the days of his prosperity at Versailles, surrounded by all the nobles of his court, to whom his word was law, had he displayed such dignity as now when confronting those whom he knew to be thirsting for his blood.

As has been said before, he had carefully studied the history of the English sovereign who had been in circumstances similar to his own. But, as he had marked

* Moore's Journal, ii. 503.

out for himself at the outset of the struggle a different line of conduct from his, so he preserved that difference in this the closing scene. In one respect they were alike. Charles, when standing before those whom he knew to be resolved on his death, lost none of the kingly courage which had led him on more than one hard-fought field to put himself at the head of his troops. Louis, who, though lacking Charles's energy, had throughout been equally fearless, now, when brought face to face with his fate, bore himself with a still more kingly resolution, a readier presence of mind than he had hitherto displayed. But while Charles, mindful above all things to uphold his royal dignity, disdained to acknowledge the authority of his judges or to reply to questions which no one had a right to put to him, Louis, solicitous rather for his character as a man of virtue, good faith, and sincere affection for his people, readily submitted to the most searching examination, though under the most unfavorable circumstances. According to the ordinary practice prisoners are furnished with a copy of the indictment against them some days before they are called upon to plead to it. But Louis had not only received no such information, but no warning that he was to be put on his trial at all till he was thus suddenly called upon not only to plead to the indictment, but to answer questions on each article.

Santerre was the master of the ceremonies to usher the king into the hall. Barrère at once addressed him with brief and stern unceremoniousness. "Louis," said he, "the French nation accuses you. You are about to hear the indictment which enumerates the offences which are imputed to you. You may sit down." And, as each article was recited, he interrogated him on it. In the days of his prosperity Louis had been timid and unready, slow of speech, and often

obscure. Now he was prompt, unhesitating, plain, and forcible. He met the whole indictment by one general plea as to all actions done by him previously to the enactment of the Constitution, that he had a right to perform them as the acknowledged chief of the nation. That for all that had been done since, the Constitution itself declared his ministers responsible, and not himself.* But he also made separate answers to each question, absolutely denying some of the charges which it was attempted to fix on him, and explaining others. One count accused him of having lavished money among the inhabitants of the suburbs to excite them to a counter-revolution. He explained that they were men in great poverty, and that as king it became him to relieve distress of every kind. Another article set forth that he had caused his troops to fire on the people in Paris in 1789, at the Champ de Mars in 1791, and at the Tuilleries in the preceding August. The accusation bore its own refutation on the face of it, since, had he done so, he would not now have been in the power of those who were thus presuming to impeach him. But it wrung from him an impassioned protest of his deep and endearing love for the people, which had ever made him cherish every drop of their blood. Of the concealment of papers in the iron safe he declared that he had no knowledge whatever. It would be irksome and useless to recapitulate the series of malignant and ridiculous charges, and of his triumphant answers. When the examination was concluded, Louis requested a copy of the indictment, and permission to choose advocates for his defence. He was desired to withdraw, and a debate as furious as any that had been excited by any portion of the previous proceedings, took place on the propriety of granting

* "La Terreur," v. 239.

these moderate demands, which were the natural rights of the very meanest criminal under prosecution. A copy of the indictment indeed no one objected to afford him; but when Pétion affirmed that it was equally a matter of course to allow him to select counsel to plead for him, and that to hesitate on such a matter was to attack every principle of humanity, the whole body of Jacobins raised an outcry as if they in imagination saw their victim wrested from their hands. Marat called the request a piece of palace chicanery, and the number of members who demanded to speak upon the question was so great that the discussion was adjourned till the next day.

Meanwhile the unhappy king was kept in the antechamber within hearing of the uproar, which even Barrère described as one which degraded the Assembly to an arena of gladiators, uncertain of his fate, and almost prostrate with the fatigue of his examination now that the excitement of it was over. So strongly did he feel the need of some support that, seeing Chaumette, the legal adviser of the municipality, eating something, he humbly whispered a petition for a share of his food. Chaumette, pitying his exhaustion, but fearful of being suspected of a secret understanding with him, bade him ask aloud for what he wanted, and when Louis had repeated his request, gladly gave him a share of what he truly called a Spartan repast. It was but a piece of stale bread, and his charity was thrown away, for Louis, when he got it, had not even strength left to eat it. Still harder trials were in store for him before the day closed. Presently Santerre came in with an order to conduct him back to the Temple. The same vast military escort surrounded the carriage, carefully watching to check any attempt that might be made to rescue him,

but encouraging the gangs of ruffians whom by this time the Jacobins had posted at different points, and who, as Louis approached, raised the savage cry of "Death to the tyrant," or the most bloodthirsty stanzas of the Marseillaise, a fierce revolutionary song which had become popular. When he reached the Temple the royal prisoner's first anxiety was to hasten to his family. He was informed that he was to see them no more. "That is hard," said he; "what, not even my son, a boy not seven years old?" The order of the municipal council was absolute. To this additional cruelty the unhappy prince was forced to submit, and he retired to rest without the comfort of seeing those whom he loved far more than himself, and the poor solace of relating to them his sufferings of the day, and imparting to them his anticipations of the future.

The next day the debate on allowing him counsel was renewed. The Jacobins made unexampled efforts to carry their point. They packed the galleries before daybreak. They stimulated the municipal council to come, almost with menaces, to the bar of the Convention; but their violence defeated itself. Some even of the most republican and pitiless of the deputies, Barrère himself among the number, were indignant at the attempt of the municipal council to dictate to them, and in the end not only was Pétion's motion carried that Louis should be allowed as many advocates as he desired, of his own selection, and granting them ten days to prepare his defence, but a resolution was also passed overruling in part the municipal council's regulation of the previous day, and giving Louis leave again to see his children. Yet lest these innocent infants should prove messengers of conspiracy and danger between him and his wife and sister, it was

ordered at the same time that, so long as they were thus allowed to visit him the little prince and princess should be separated from their mother and aunt. The childishness of the suspicions that could prompt such a condition is even more ridiculous than the cruelty of the order is detestable. But it afforded another opportunity to Louis to display the boundlessness of his self-denying fortitude. Cheerless as his prison would be without the sight of one of his family; comforting as the innocent prattle of those children, both of singular attraction and promise, would have been to his broken spirit, he thought it better for them that they should be with their mother and their aunt, and for their sakes renounced their society and allowed the decree of the municipal council to be carried out in all its severity.*

Louis chose for his counsel Target and Tronchet, both of whom had been prominent members of the first or Constituent Assembly. But Target, from fear of displeasing the Jacobins, refused to act. His poltroonery brought upon him worse evils than any which he had dreaded. He became the universal mark for the scorn of the whole city. The very fishwomen insulted him.† And when the reign of terror came, and the monsters before whom he now trembled began to look on all sides for victims, the infamy with which his refusal had for ever stamped him marked him out as one of whom all parties would willingly be rid; and he was one of the first to be sent to the scaffold from which he now shrank from trying to protect his innocent sovereign. But that sovereign had no scarcity of willing champions, if such could have availed him. The parallel between

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* "La Terreur," v. 260.

† "Moore's Journal," ii. 526.

his condition and that of Charles was maintained in this particular also. As Richmond, Hertford, Southampton, and Lindesay had sought to devote themselves to, or if need were, to sacrifice themselves for their royal master,* so among the former ministers and councillors of Louis, noble-minded men were not wanting to volunteer their service to him, though it could not be rendered without replacing themselves in danger from which, without such self-devotion, they were safe. Several weeks before, when the project of bringing him to trial was first mentioned, Lally, Cazalès, and Malouet had written from England to the Convention to beg that, in such an event, they might be allowed to appear as his advocates; and now that the impeachment was decided on, the Count de Narbonne addressed the president with a similar petition, urging with great earnestness that there were many subjects on which no one could so well justify the king, since it was he himself who had been his minister during the last negotiations with the German princes.† But the preference was given to the old chancellor Lamoignon de Malesherbes. One of the excuses which Target had alleged was his age; Malesherbes was twenty years older, he was seventy-four; he had been twice a minister, and, on each occasion his tenure of office had been signalized by great improvements in the law, and an enlightened policy of liberality and toleration. No man in the whole nation enjoyed a higher reputation among all ranks and parties; and he too now wrote to the president, stating that he had twice been called to his master's councils at a time when such a post was an

* Hume's History of England, c. lix.
† Moore's Journal, ii. 535.

object of universal ambition, and that therefore gratitude bound him to place himself once more at that master's disposal when others thought the service dangerous. Louis gladly accepted his aid, and a day or two afterwards M. De Sèze, a lawyer of great reputation in his profession, and of a loyalty which had never swerved, was added, as a third counsel, when Malesherbes and Tronchet found the papers which they had to examine too numerous and important for them to sift sufficiently in the time allowed to them.

To Louis, though he had no hope that any advocacy would be permitted to save his life, the opportunity of conferring with one whom he and all so highly esteemed as Malesherbes was an unspeakable comfort and support. Yet Robespierre grudged him even that alleviation of his sorrows, and ran the risk of causing a division in his party by his attempts to deprive him of it. Under his influence the municipal council issued a decree that the advocates were to be treated with every possible indignity; they were to be stripped of their clothes, most rigorously searched, and then dressed in other garments, that there might be no possibility of their conveying any secret letters to the prisoner, or any weapons or poison to enable him by suicide to escape from their vengeance; after their first introduction to Louis they were never to be allowed to quit the town till the conclusion of his trial; nor were they ever to be permitted to confer with him except in the presence of commissioners whom the municipality would appoint to be present. When this atrocious decree was reported to the Convention many of the fiercest Jacobins, even Valazé, even Chabot, could not conceal their disgust. Valazé branded it as one which would disgrace the nation in the eyes of Europe and of

posterity. Bazire affirmed that it would change the feelings of the nation itself, and lead it to pity Louis when it saw him harassed with such needless and cruel injustice. Robespierre alone in the whole Assembly defended the decree, and branded those who objected to it as people who wished to save the king, "the criminal, prompt justice on whom they owed to the whole nation." But few, even in the galleries, applauded him. One deputy with honorable indignation, demanded that measures should be taken to save the Assembly from a repetition of such "cannibal vociferations." And though the Convention feared now to set itself so pointedly in opposition to the municipal council as formally to rescind its decree, it nullified it by pronouncing its adherence to its own previous resolution that the advocates should have, at all times, free access to and uncontrolled communication with the prisoner.

But this momentary concession to reason and equity indicated no relaxation of the resolution to pursue Louis to his death; nor did he so deceive himself as to found on it any such expectation. When Malesherbes was first admitted to his presence he embraced him tenderly; with eyes bathed in tears he owned the error he had committed in consenting to the disbanding of his guards, and putting himself wholly in the power of a factious Assembly. He deplored the situation to which his love for his people and his abnegation of self had brought him; but he warned his aged friend that in thus coming to his aid he was but risking his life in an effort which would be fruitless to save his own. He was too true a prophet with respect to both himself and his friend. Malesherbes professed to doubt his warning, and tried to comfort him by a reference to the justice of his

cause. "It will not serve me," replied the king. "They will kill me. To leave my memory free from stain, to establish my innocence, is the only victory which is within my reach; and to gain that let us now prepare my defence."* And he began to apply himself to the examination of his papers, to the giving Malesherbes information, and to the suggestion of different topics and arguments with as much calmness as if it were some indifferent person whose life was at stake upon the issue.

Yet for a moment there seemed a hope that his destruction might lead to the safety of his family. Two days afterwards Buzot the Girondin, in a speech which breathed nothing but the most bloodthirsty threats against Louis himself, brought forward a motion that the Convention should content itself with the destruction of the tyrant, and that, in the name of the same national interest to which it was about to immolate him, it should decree the immediate and perpetual banishment of his whole family. Louvet supported him; and, if they had had the address to procure an instant vote on the question, it would have been carried, and the French people would have been saved the additional infamy of imbruing its hands in the blood of women, of the noble queen, and of that pious princess against whose spotless virtue and prudence envy and calumny themselves had never dared lift their voices. But the Jacobins were already planning their destruction also, and were resolved not to be baulked of their prey. They had found that the proposals of their rivals, when they could not be defeated by direct opposition, could be turned aside by delay. And they put forward so

* Lacretelle, x. 286, quoting the account given by Malesherbes himself.

many of their party to speak, raising the question whether the Duke d'Orleans and his sons, who were serving in Flanders with the army, should be included in the vote, that they were able to prevent any division being come to that day; and when the first impression of Buzot's and Louvet's speeches was blunted by delay, they no longer saw any prospect of success, and allowed the proposal to drop in silence.

CHAPTER XLIV.

MEANWHILE the arrangements for the king's trial went on, and both parties busied themselves in preparing for the final struggle as if the result were as yet really undecided; as if the one doubted their power to carry out the bloody deed on which they had determined, or the other entertained any serious hope of being able to prevent it. The Jacobins were more zealous than ever in their efforts to terrify the other parties in the Convention into submission. They not only, as before, stimulated the municipal council to pass violent resolutions, insisting on the king's death as a measure of justice due to the people, or taking it for granted as a matter of course, but they organized mobs to carry the same demand on different grounds to the bar of the Convention. One gang was clothed in rags, and, declaring themselves to be starving through the machinations of Louis, clamoured for his blood that their hunger might then be satisfied. Another, composed of cripples and women in widow's garments, professed to have received their mutilations or to have sustained their domestic afflictions at the hands of the king's troops in the preceding August. And these tricks were not without effect even on some who knew the petitioners to be impostors, but who saw in their shameless importunity sufficient proof how little those who had contrived these scenes would scruple to avenge themselves on any deputies who should presume to oppose their will.

The 26th of December was the day which the Convention had appointed for hearing the advocates of Louis in his defence. The day before (it was Christmas day), not doubting from the impatience of his enemies that his sentence would soon be pronounced, and uncertain how rapidly its execution might follow, he prepared himself for death, and drew up his will; not indeed that he had now any wealth to bequeath. All that he could call his property was now limited to the clothes that he had on, his watch, and a few pieces of gold, with one or two books; and those he left to his faithful servant Cléry. The object of his will, therefore, was not to distribute splendid legacies to his kinsmen or dependents, but to recommend himself, his fate here and hereafter, and that of his faithful queen, his children, and all else who were dear to him, to God, as "the only witness of his thoughts, the only being to whom he could address himself;" to make his peace too with men; to implore the pardon of those whom he had involuntarily injured, (he did not remember that he had ever voluntarily injured a single human being,) and, still more, to express his own pardon of all those, who, without his having ever given them cause, had become his enemies. And he earnestly exhorted his son, if he should have the misfortune to become king, to discard all hatred and resentment against any one, and especially any such feeling that might arise on account of the misfortunes and sorrows which he himself was now undergoing. He concluded by expressing the deepest gratitude to his counsel, and by protesting in the sight of God his entire innocence of all the crimes laid to his charge.*

* It is given at length by Lamartine, "History of the Girondins," xxxiv. 13.

No document more creditable to the heart of the writer, more touching in its hopelessness, more admirable in its fortitude and universal charity, was ever penned. The evening was devoted to giving a last consideration to the arguments which his advocates were to adduce in his defence on the morrow. De Sèze, who was to be the spokesman, was prepared to open it with an appeal to the feelings of the nation, and even of the judges. It was so eloquently expressed that it drew tears from the eyes of his colleagues; but Louis insisted on its being struck out. To appeal to their pity he felt would be degrading, as he knew it would be useless; he would stand only on his innocence. And the lawyers could not contest the propriety and dignity of his decision.

At nine on the 26th, Chambon and Santerre came to conduct him to the Convention. He was received, as before, in profound silence; the spectators in the galleries, which had again been carefully packed by the Jacobins, being instructed, with consummate cunning, to receive the defence with the appearance of complete indifference; not to provoke applause from any quarter by their own tumult. De Sèze at once rose and spoke; and, if a sound exposition of law and equity, if a minute dissection and masterly refutation of every argument on which the indictment rested, if a complete demonstration of the king's innocence on every point on which his conduct was called into question, could have availed to move those who, though calling themselves judges, had resolved on their decision before a single word was heard, Louis must yet have been saved. The advocate had no need to go back to the early ages to prove the right of his client to the throne. It was recognised by the very constitution to which, as members of the Constituent

or Legislative Assemblies the majority of the deputies present had been consenting parties. That constitution had moreover most positively declared the person of the king sacred and inviolable. And, even in the case of his violating his oath and becoming the enemy of the nation, had affixed to such conduct no severer penalty than the loss of his throne. That was the law which the nation had imposed upon itself; and, if now the Convention should refuse to be bound by it, they would excite the indignation of the world, and prove the constitution to have been but a horrible snare. Some of the members now affirmed royalty to be a crime. But the crime would be that of the nation, which, having by the constitution said to Louis, "I offer you royalty," now was asked to say to him, "I will punish you with death for having accepted it."

De Sèze proceeded to show that in no one of its details was the trial conducted as the law had prescribed. There was no separation of powers; no judges or jurymen sworn to pronounce truly on the evidence; the same persons were jury, judges, and what was more shocking, accusers also. Nor had the prisoner the privilege of challenging one of all that array. Moreover, instead of the disproportion between the number of those who convicted and those who acquitted on which the law insisted in ordinary cases, in this instance a majority of one single voice was to suffice for condemnation. In short, all the safeguards which the law had carefully framed for the protection of innocence, and threw around the meanest criminal, were wanting here. "Citizens," the intrepid advocate proceeded, "I will speak to you with the frankness of a free man. I look among you for judges, and I see nothing but prosecutors. You

intend to pronounce on the fate of Louis, and it is you yourselves who accuse him. You intend to pronounce on the fate of Louis, and you have already expressed your wishes on the subject; all Europe knows your opinions. Louis then is to be the only Frenchman for whom laws and forms have no existence. He is to have neither the rights of a citizen nor the prerogatives of a king. He is to be allowed the benefit neither of his ancient nor of his new position."

We need not follow the speaker in his analysis and disproof of each separate charge; nearly every one of which, as for instance that which charged on the king the deaths of those who fell in storming his palace on the 10th of August, was self-refuted by its own absurdity. He added, though in this, as in his intended opening, he was going beyond what Louis himself would have sanctioned, a claim for him on the protection of the Assembly as having voluntarily placed himself in August under its protection; he invoked on his behalf the rights of asylum sacred even among the fiercest and most uncivilized nations. And he wound up his unanswerable speech with a peroration which was itself addressed to that posterity with a fear of whose judgment he made a last effort to shame the judges into justice. "Listen," said he, "and hear beforehand the judgment which history will bid fame record on this transaction. Louis ascended the throne at twenty years of age. At twenty years of age he on the throne set an example of virtue to the whole nation. He was free alike from culpable weakness and from corrupting passions. He was frugal, just, rigidly virtuous. He showed himself the constant friend of the people. The people desired the removal of a tax which was burdensome to them; he removed

it. The people demanded the abolition of serfdom; he began to abolish it in his own domains. The people solicited reforms in the criminal law to soften the fate of accused persons; he established those reforms. The people desired that thousands of Frenchmen whom the rigour of our customs had up to that time deprived of rights which belong to free citizens, should acquire or recover those rights; he conferred them on them by irrevocable laws. The people desired liberty; he gave it. He even outran their wishes by his own sacrifices. And yet it is in the name of these same people that to-day demands are made. . . . Citizens, I cannot go on. I pause in the view of history. Recollect that history will judge your judgment; and that her verdict will be that of ages."*

Louis himself added a few words. Feeling, as he said, that he was addressing them for perhaps the last time, he would still affirm the perfect innocence of his conscience; the strict truth of all that his advocate had urged on his behalf; and above all things he wished to give one more emphatic denial to the charge that on the 10th of August he had willingly shed the blood of the people, or that the miseries of that day were attributable to him; and he appealed to his conduct on all occasions, and to the repeated proofs of affection for the people which he had given, as evidence that he was willing to spare their blood even at the expense of his own. They ought, he averred, to relieve him for ever from such an imputation.

He was desired to withdraw. The reading of the indictment against him, his personal examination, and the speech of a single lawyer, constituted the whole

* "La Terreur," v. 282-9; Lacretelle, x. 200-209.

proceedings of the most momentous trial that had ever taken place in the kingdom. But, if the trial had been hurried over with unseemly haste, the censure cannot be extended to the verdict. For the discussions on the question whether the king should be tried at all had hardly taken as long as those which now ensued on how the decision should be given. That it was not pronounced at once was not the fault of the Jacobins. One of that party who in the debates of the next three weeks seemed desirous to wrest the palm of pre-eminent ferocity even from Marat, a deputy from the north, named Duhem, the moment that the door had closed on the retiring prisoner, rose and declared that, as all formalities had been now fulfilled, there was nothing more to do but to pronounce at once whether Louis should be put to death. He was seconded by Bazire; but Lanjuinais, from the Ile-et-Vilaine, in Brittany, next gained possession of the tribune, and stood forward in defence of the king on every point. He said that there were two questions to be decided: should Louis be judged by a tribunal of law, or should the Convention as a legislative body adopt in respect of him some measure conceived in the interest of the general safety? If he were to be judged by a tribunal, he claimed for him the observance of all the forms of justice devised for the protection of all accused citizens without exception; and contended that the Convention was not, and could not be, a tribunal entitled to pronounce sentence, since in it many were seated who avowed themselves his direct and personal enemies, who boasted of having stormed his palace and driven him from it. Those who had thus shown their sentiments towards the prisoner could not, he insisted, be at once his accusers, his jury, and his judges. The Jacobins tried to drown his arguments by uproar.

"You prefer, then," they shouted, "the safety of the tyrant to the safety of the people." But he was not so to be silenced. He declared that it was for the sake of the people themselves and in the name of the general welfare that he entreated the Convention not to dishonour itself; and he concluded by demanding an adjournment of three days to give time for the speech of De Sèze to be printed. The uproar was prodigious; Duhem, St. Just, Legendre, Marat, all shouting or screaming out threats of different purport from their places. One body of the Jacobins pressed around the chair, insulting and menacing the president for not at once closing the discussion; and a deputy named Jullien proposed his instant deposition. Pétion rose to speak; and, as the Jacobins rushed forward to pull him from the tribunal, and the Girondins to support him, it seemed for a moment as if the two parties would come to blows in the very chamber of legislature. But at last all consented to adjourn; the only decision that was come to being that no other question should be allowed to interrupt the discussion on the fate of the king till that was decided.

Accordingly for the next ten days it was maintained with uninterrupted vehemence, though the great majority of the speakers were on one side against the king. Vergniaud, indeed, delivered a long, rambling speech, of which portions seemed to be in his favour; as when he insisted that whatever decision the deputies might come to, it would require the ratification of the people. But the more practical portions of his harangue were of a different character; since he scouted the idea of the king's inviolability as "an absurd dogma which he would not degrade his reason by defending." Brissot and Gensonné spoke nearly to the

same effect; but Buzot and Barbaroux, though professing to belong to the Girondin party, were too much under the influence of Madame Roland to say a word in favour of mercy. On the contrary, Barbaroux set himself to write a reply to the arguments of De Sèze; and, though he had not much success as an orator or a logician, the bitter animosity of his language seemed an indication that at least a large section of the Girondins would be found arrayed against Louis in the final struggle. Robespierre's speech, implacable as it was, and strenuous in insisting on "the necessity of cementing liberty and public tranquillity by the punishment of a tyrant," might seem to have had an effect favorable to Louis; at least at no period of the debate did so many consecutive speeches plead for mercy as immediately after he had descended from the tribune. Guiter, from the Pyrenees, proposed exile as the punishment; Morisson, from La Vendée, added that a decent pension should be provided for him and his family; and another deputy of Le Nord, Fockedy, went even beyond Lanjuinais, and plainly denied the competency of the Convention to pronounce judgment on such a case at all.

The feeling of the Convention for a brief moment had seemed to incline towards mercy; such mercy, that is, as would have been shown by stripping of all his possessions and expelling from his country, a king with his whole family, who, however he may have been deficient in royal dignity or chivalrous gallantry, in the softer virtues of humanity, benevolence, and sincere love for his people, was equalled by few princes who had ever sat upon a throne. When Barrère rose, the infamy of this man's character was not conspicuous

at first; in more peaceful times it might never have revealed itself, for he was not so much naturally cruel as profoundly selfish. He had no innate bloodthirstiness like Marat or Robespierre; no ruffian-like audacity or ambitious ferocity like Danton. His aim was to secure his own safety and prosperity by keeping on good terms with those who would become the masters of the State, to ingratiate himself with whom no crime that could be required of him would be too great or too shameful; and his talents were such as qualified him to be useful at such a time to those whose lead he might resolve to follow, and pre-eminently dangerous to those against whom he might declare; for he had a plausible, poetical eloquence, a fertility of argument, a command of language, and a quiet, gentle manner, which, when he concurred in or promoted measures of cruelty, made it seem as if he were acting under the pressure of an unwilling conviction, and that, had they not been truly indispensable, he would not have been found to advocate them. He was endowed, too, with a shrewdness in estimating the characters of men, and of coming events; and as he had made up his mind that the Jacobins were likely to prevail in the strife of parties which was already beginning, he now cast in his lot with them; and in a speech of consummate art applied himself to do away with the impressions which had been created by the speeches of Lanjuinais and others in the king's favour; and by Vergniaud's demand that the decision should be referred to the people. His arguments were the more dangerous that his language was carefully divested of the rancour and fury which in the speeches of Danton and Robespierre alarmed some even among their own followers; not that it was softened by a single touch of humanity, since his very first words showed a fixed

resolution to ensure a fatal decision.* He began by avowing that the Convention had removed the trial from the ordinary tribunals and taken the responsibility on themselves, because they feared to trust the possible scrupulousness of those who might be jurymen, or the pusillanimity of the judges, (in other words, because they were resolved on the king's condemnation). He justified the neglect of other ordinary forms on the ground that Louis was no ordinary prisoner, but "an exception to general cases both by the character of his functions and the nature of his crimes;" and he had the audacity to deny his inviolability, because, however it might have been secured to him by the constitution, "the Fédérés had deprived him of it by the sacred insurrection of the 10th of August."† Vergniaud's proposal to refer the ultimate decision to the people he demolished with solid and convincing arguments, that might be applied advantageously to arrangements which became fashionable in later stages of the Revolution, and which have even been adopted more than once since the Revolution has been conceived to be closed. He contended, with undeniable truth, that to have recourse to such a step would be to discard the principle of representation in virtue of which the Convention was assembled. Referring to the ancient republics, he allowed that at Athens and Rome the people had exercised their rights in person, all voting in the mass; but he affirmed that the consequence had been a perpetual popular tumult, and that the custom had proved the germ of dissolution which

* The sketch of this and the other speeches is taken from "La Terreur," c. 22-24.

† "Je réponds, cette inviolabilité les fédérés Brétons, Nantais, et Marseillais en ont dépouillé Louis en faisant la sainte insurrection du 10 Août."—Ib. p. 337.

was implanted in these republics from the first, and was in effect the interior vice through which they perished. The object of a representative body like the Convention was that it should do for the people what the people could not do itself. If it could not pronounce judgment on Louis it was not a Convention. A day or two before Spain had interceded for the king, making the sparing of his life a condition of her own neutrality between the contending factions. And more than one speaker had dwelt on the certainty of other nations, which had not yet declared themselves, entertaining a similar feeling, and of the impolicy of provoking the hostility of the world in arms. To some of the more furious demagogues the probability of war was no objection. Danton had already talked of throwing down, as a gage of battle to the assembled monarchs of Europe, the head of a king; but to less resolute spirits Barrère now argued that, whatever might be their secret feelings, the conduct of each nation would be regulated by its own interest alone. England, he said, was anxious only about the opening of the Scheldt and the extension of her commerce. Spain, in spite of her menacing language, would fear to lose her wealthy transmarine colonies; and neither country would endanger those objects to revenge Louis. He concluded with a vigorous and well-timed exhortation to unanimity; and so powerful was the general effect of his speech that no one attempted to reply to it. On the contrary, the Girondin leaders, who, in spite of their hypocritical professions, had no scruples about voting for Louis's death, desired to prevent any subsequent speech from marring its effect. On Guadet's motion the discussion was declared to be closed; and the final decision was postponed for a week, to give time for the con-

sideration of the order in which the different questions should be submitted to the vote of the Assembly.

While this discussion was going on, the days passed almost more drearily and sadly to the prisoner than if his fate had been already formally decided. The knowledge of the efforts that some were making in his favour kept him in suspense; yet it was a suspense without hope. He was convinced, as on quitting the hall of the Convention he told his counsel, that the Assembly had sworn to compass his death; and, looking on himself as already virtually condemned, he petitioned to be restored to communion with his family, but was again refused. Not even on New Year's day, when, in happier times, he had been especially accustomed to receive the homage and salutations of the assembled nobles of the land, was he permitted even a momentary interview with those dearest to him. His very gaolers began to pity his desolation, and connived at his sending messages to the queen and to his sister, and exchanging notes with them; though, as the ladies were not allowed ink, they could only scratch a few scarcely legible words on the paper with the pins belonging to their dresses. Yet to one so solitary even such scanty communication as that was not without its comfort; and those who aided him thought themselves abundantly repaid for their perilous humanity by a word of thanks, or in one or two instances the gift of some trifling memorial, which they eagerly secreted and reverently preserved, of a handkerchief or a glove; for to such trifles was the bounty of him who had been king of France now necessarily confined. And Louis derived further consolation from the intelligence which reached him that the feelings

and judgment of the nation at large were beginning to show themselves in his favour: not that, however strongly they might have been declared, he expected deliverance from that or any other source; but it was balm to his spirit to find that the endeavours of the Jacobins to represent him to the people as their enemy and oppressor had failed. And there was no lack of indications that such was the case. More than one department, especially from the western side of the kingdom, sent up addresses to the Convention expressing the greatest disapproval of all that had lately taken place, not scrupling to name Marat, Robespierre, Danton and the rest as the real enemies both of the people and of the Revolution; and calling for their expulsion from the Assembly. And Paris itself gave evidence that it shared the feelings of the provinces. The newspapers ventured to print letters denouncing those who encouraged disorder and murder; and when Chaumette, as the legal adviser of the municipality, endeavoured to prosecute the writers, he was baffled, defied, and ridiculed. It was characteristic of the nation that the direction which its sympathies were taking was shown most plainly at the theatre. On the 2nd of January a new play called "The Friend of the Laws" was acted at the Odéon. As a drama it was but a poor performance, and bore marks of carelessness and haste; but among the characters were three informers, whom the author placed in the most unfavorable light, causing the other characters to reproach and deride them, and whom the spectators identified with the Jacobin triumvirate. And many of the speeches contained unmistakeable allusions to their doctrines. One of them was introduced denouncing property as the root

of all evil, and praising robbery as justice; while Forlis, the hero of the piece, the friend of the laws, launched sarcasm after sarcasm against the whole tribe of demagogues. The success of the play was triumphant; the spectators, quick as an Athenian audience in the time of Aristophanes, caught up every allusion, and showed their application of it by vociferous applause; while the Jacobins gave it increased point by their threats in the Club against every one concerned, author, actors, and audience alike. Laya, the writer, put himself under the protection of the Convention by dedicating it to that body. His dedicatory letter gave occasion to a fresh tumult. The Moderates proposed an honorable mention of him in the records; the Jacobins denounced him as a criminal deserving instant punishment. The committee of public instruction was ordered to read the play and report upon its tendency; and meanwhile the muni-

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* "De la propriété découlent à longs flots
Les vices, les horreurs, messieurs, tous les fléaux.
* * * * *
Tout est commun. Le vol n'est plus vol, c'est justice."

And Forlis speaks of

Ces poltrons intrépides
Du fond d'un cabinet prêchant les homicides;
Ces Solons nés d'hier, enfants réformateurs,
Qui redigent en lois leurs rêves déstructeurs!
* * * * *
Ces faux adorateurs dont la dévotion
N'est qu'un dehors platré, n'est qu'une hypocrisie;
Ces bons et francs croyants dont l'âme apostasie,
Qui pour faire haïr le plus beau don des cieux
Nous font la liberté sanguinaire comme eux.
* * * * *
Que tous ces charlatans, populaires larrons,
Et de patriotisme insolents fanfarons,
Purgent de leur aspect cette terre affranchie.

Quoted by M. Ternaux: "La Terreur," v. 366-8.

cipal council tried to take the matter into their own hands; and Laya and his comedy nearly had the honour of causing a final breach between that body and the Convention. The council prohibited the play from being acted, and sent Chambon the mayor to the theatre to see that their interdict was respected. It was played before his face in defiance of him; and, when he sent to the Convention to complain of the insolence of the manager, that assembly, in spite of the utmost violence of the Jacobins, decided that the municipal council had no right to interfere with the theatres. The council, exasperated at the affront, issued a fresh edict, closing every theatre in Paris; the Convention annulled the edict, and the Girondin Gensonné proposed to deprive the council of the control of the police.

The whole city was in a violent state of agitation. Both parties were putting forth their utmost efforts for the mastery; and, to any bystander who knew not the incurable weakness of the Girondins' inaction, it must have seemed that the victory was secured to their side. All that the Jacobins could do was to collect those Fédérés who adhered to them with the delegates of the city sections at a festival professing to symbolize the union of the departments with the metropolis, at which some of Roland's reports were publicly burnt; and which, after the company had been admitted to visit the municipal council, and the council had ordered the record of so glorious a day to be engraven on some of the stones which had belonged to the Bastille, was terminated by the whole procession, with most of the magistrates, dancing the carmagnole in front of the Hôtel de Ville. The measures of the Girondins, on the other hand, were votes in the Convention, wanting nothing of the force

of law except that, after being passed, they should be executed. On the 13th Vergniaud became president; and emboldened by having their own chief in such a position, Buzot and Rabaut St. Etienne proposed the formation of a guard to protect the Assembly from the violence of the sections of Paris, who, though in reality but a small body, insulted the deputies "at the very door of this their sanctuary, and menaced them with daggers." Once more there was an uproar. The Left, the Mountain as it began to be called, from the height to which the back seats on that side were raised against the walls, loudly declared the falsehood of such a charge against the citizens. On the Right two hundred deputies rose at once to testify that it was true. Never yet had the Jacobins made greater efforts to stifle discussion by tumult, but they were defeated. The resolution was passed; and then, as if the Girondins had been content with thus showing that they had the supremacy in the Assembly, forgetting that the greater their preponderance, the deeper was also their infamy if they failed to exert it for the good of the State, they took no steps whatever to carry it out. The guard was not levied, and this pusillanimous inaction of those who had defeated them in debate only encouraged the sections to still more violent conduct, till they attempted to close the barriers of the city, and began to threaten to force the prisons and renew the scenes of September; while, to complete the intimidation of the Moderate party, Pache, the minister of war, a resolute Jacobin, handed over to Santerre 132 cannons which had been brought in from St. Denis; and which he at once ostentatiously began to put in order for action.

On the 14th the discussion on the king's fate was to be reopened. But before a word was said on the

subject, a fresh instance of the violation of all justice which had been exhibited in the trial was brought to light. Garat, the minister of justice, who was not without sympathy for the king, announced that he had received a letter from Bertrand de Moleville, complaining that he had transmitted to Malesherbes a packet of important documents calculated to justify Louis from many of the charges brought against him, but that, as he had learnt, they had been intercepted and delivered to the Convention, who had detained them, and refused Malesherbes permission to consult them. Bertrand protested, as became his character, against so flagrant a violation of every form of law and principle of justice. But even the Girondins abstained from supporting his complaint; and when one member had remarked that Bertrand being an emigrant was an outlaw, and being therefore dead in law could not be supposed to write letters or utter complaints, the Convention passed to the order of the day.* But discouraging as such a circumstance was, the Moderate party would not yet abandon their endeavours to save Louis. Cambacèrés, who in the latter stages of the Revolution rose to the highest eminence, and who, in the hope of winning a favorable vote, now represented him as, while living, the best possible hostage for the peace of the country, revived the doubt of the legal competency of the Convention to pronounce judgment; but he had few supporters, and the subjects of contest between the two parties ultimately turned on the order in which the three questions should be put: whether Louis was guilty; whether his sentence should be pronounced by the Convention or referred to the whole people; and what that sentence should be. No one doubted that

* Moore's Journal, ii. 555.

much depended on the way in which this point should be decided, or that, if it were first resolved that the penalty should be death, some would then shrink from giving a hostile verdict, which, if the question of guilt or innocence were the first submitted to them, they would salve over to their consciences by the pretence of a hope that conviction might be followed by a lighter sentence. But manifest as this was, and vehemently as Lanjuinais, Rabaut, St. Etienne, and others in consequence insisted on the acquittal or conviction being the last point to be decided, Vergniaud and his immediate friends preferred voting with Barrère, who pointed out that as, if an appeal were made to the people, it would be, not on the question of the prisoner's guilt or innocence, but on that of the penalty to be inflicted on him if he were found guilty, it might save much trouble to decide that point first, since, if he were acquitted, the other questions would drop. With the support of the Girondin leaders he carried his resolution, as he did two others, that the one verdict was to include fifty-seven counts of the indictment, and that a bare majority was to suffice. It was to no purpose that Lanjuinais insisted that the practice of every court of law in the kingdom required a separate verdict on each count, and made a majority of two-thirds necessary to a conviction. With the help of the Girondin leaders, who still professed an anxiety to save Louis, the Jacobins carried every point in the way calculated to ensure his condemnation, and when the final votes immediately decisive of the king's fate were given, they were still supported on them by Vergniaud and his friends as unflinchingly as on these preliminary questions. If, as the advocates of the Girondins have maintained, they were acting under constraint, believing that co-operation with Robes-

pierre afforded the only prospect of saving their own lives; little as such an excuse would avail to justify or palliate, if indeed it does not rather aggravate the infamy of their participation in the murder of their king, whom they thus confessed to be innocent, it is consoling to remember that their baseness failed in its object. Every one of those Girondins who thus voted with the Jacobins were by the Jacobins sent to the scaffold. Lanjuinais who at every step so manfully withstood them, almost alone of his party escaped the guillotine and survived the republic, passed a not unhonoured career as a subject of the empire, and when the power of Napoleon was overthrown, was still spared to contribute in no trivial degree to the resettlement of the nation under its ancient line of princes.

On the next day, the 15th, the question of the guilt or innocence of Louis was put to the vote. Lanjuinais with a few others declared that he had been sent to the Convention as a legislator, not as a judge, and refused to give a judicial verdict. A few were absent; 683 delivered their opinion, and every one of them pronounced him guilty. Instantly the second question, whether it should be referred to the people to affix the penalty was submitted to the Assembly. In spite of his speech, Vergniaud and his friends coalesced with Robespierre and his friends, and thus swelled the opponents of the appeal to the people to 424; 137 more than those who supported it. It remained therefore for the Convention itself to pronounce sentence. And before night all Paris knew that the next morning that question, than which none so momentous had ever come before a French tribunal, was to be determined by a body who had constituted themselves judges, but on whom not one of the

people whom they claimed to represent had ever dreamt of conferring such authority.

Never in the history of the world has any real court of justice presented such a spectacle as the Convention afforded on the 16th. Though assured of the support of the Girondin leaders Robespierre and Danton felt scarcely secure of their object, and judged it necessary to continue their intimidation of all who might be disposed to thwart them. Dark as is a January morning, the Hall of the Assembly was opened at seven. Instantly the galleries were packed with a mob of mixed ruffians of both sexes, and long before that hour every approach had been occupied by similar gangs, who muttered the most savage menaces in the ears of every deputy whom they mistrusted. Many silently cowered under these menaces, and basely resolved to avoid their vengeance by compliance. Some, such as Lanjuinais, forced their way disdainfully through the press without seeming to notice the monsters or their language. One, of frail body, but of noble birth and noble spirit, who had been the Marquis de Villette till the proscription of all titles, and was now Citizen Villette, and member for the department of the Oise, laughed in the faces of his threateners. Instantly a score of daggers were at his throat, and he was bade to pledge himself to vote for the death of the tyrant or die. He pushed aside the weapons, and looking the assassins in the face, declared that he would not obey them, and that they did not dare to kill him. Awed by his fearlessness, they shrank back, and he passed in to give his voice, as he had announced, for the king's preservation. The voting began. Each deputy was summoned in turn to the tribune to record his vote: and, as it was for death or for mercy, the spectators in the galleries cheered or hooted the voter. Some of the Jacobin

deputies were busy at the foot of the tribune, putting down on a card, like gamesters at a hazard table, the votes as they were given, and from time to time communicating the result to the galleries, and sending up wine to the women, who drank toasts "to the tyrant's death." Great was the cheering when Vergniaud and his party gave one after another their votes for death. Robespierre himself was scarcely greeted with more warmth; nor Danton, who, even while exulting in the aid of the Girondins, could not conceal his scorn for them, but coupled his vote with a sneer at those pretended statesmen. One deputy alone gained no acclamations when he pronounced the fatal sentence. He was the infamous, the wretched Duke d'Orleans. In adulation of the mob, and the hope that the populace might place him on the throne of his kinsman, he had long since renounced not only his princely title, but his family name, and had accepted that given him by the foul ill-omened Hebert, Egalité. In this name he now mounted the tribune, and affixed his signature to a declaration that "solely occupied with his duty; and convinced that all who had assumed, or ever should assume sovereignty over the people, deserved death, he voted for death." Even the galleries shuddered at the nearest kinsman of the unhappy Louis thus aiding in his destruction, and Robespierre himself did not spare his sarcasms on his baseness. But the vote was not the less valid, and went to swell the majority when on the morning of the 17th, the collection of votes having occupied the whole day and night, Vergniaud pronounced that by a majority of 387 to 334 the Convention had condemned Louis to death.*

* His first declaration of the numbers was 366 to 355. But that was presently found to be a misreckoning, and the real number was that given in the text.

The result had been anticipated. It had not long been declared, when the king's three advocates once more appeared at the bar, to read an appeal to the whole nation, signed by Louis himself; which De Sèze and Tronchet supported by a renewal of eloquent and impassioned argument, and which Malesherbes was only prevented from enforcing by his deep grief which stifled his aged voice with uncontrollable sobs. Guadet, the Girondin, led the opposition to the demand. It was rejected; and the only question which now remained to be discussed was when the sentence just pronounced should be executed. Those who wished to save Louis were eager for a delay, probably with a secret feeling that a respite might perhaps give time for some rising of the people in his favour. For the same reason the Jacobins were zealous for instant execution. Once more Vergniaud united with them; though some of his party, Pétion, Brissot, and even Buzot, would no longer follow him. When on the morning of the 19th the votes were counted for the last time, it was found that the majority was the largest which the party of blood had yet mustered. Three hundred and eighty voted for execution within twenty-four hours, while only three hundred and ten were willing to postpone it. The fate of Louis was decided. Nothing now remained but to announce it to him and accomplish it.

Malesherbes, who had conveyed to him the intelligence of the original sentence, was not permitted to communicate to him the failure of every effort to arrest or delay the blow. With useless, purposeless malignity, the municipal council refused him all further access to his master: the Convention acquiesced; and the task of declaring to the condemned monarch that the next day was to be his last was imposed on Garat, as minister of justice, who

in vain recoiled from it, exclaiming with profitless, if not dangerous sympathy, "That no one had had a more fearful duty to perform." It was three on the morning of the 20th before the sentence was engrossed in proper form; and Louis was roused from his bed to hear it. The announcement did not take him by surprise. Those who made it thought, from the expression of his face, that it was not even unwelcome to him; and, in truth, if ever mortal man can be willing to meet death, one so pure, so prepared to die, might well have hailed with cheerfulness a release from the measureless and inconceivable woes with which his life had long been embittered. He listened with unmoved calmness and dignity to the sentence as it was formally read by the secretary of the Executive Council, who accompanied Garat; making no reply, but placing in the minister's hand a sealed letter to be laid before the Convention. So bewildered was Garat with the painful character of the duty which he had just performed, and with his fear of those who had imposed it on him, that he hesitated to be the bearer of a message which might displease them. To satisfy him Louis broke the seal, and with a voice in which no tremor, nor even the slightest excitement was perceptible, read to him the requests which the letter conveyed to the Assembly; petitions which he, born to be the sovereign of the whole nation, and eminently deserving such a position by his manifold virtues, was now reduced to address to a body swayed by the meanest of his subjects, whose characters were still viler than their birth; the last petitions which he was ever to address to human being. From the beginning of these troubles the principal anxiety of himself and of the queen had been for others, not for themselves. And now the

visible approach of death but strengthened that feeling. The first request which the letter contained was for others: that the Convention would spare his devoted wife, his much-loved children, and his sister, and allow them to retire in safety and freedom from the country; and that his faithful servants might not suffer for their attachment to him. For himself he asked a respite of three days to prepare to present himself before his God; permission to see his family; and to receive the visits of a priest of his own selection. Garat saw no risk in delivering such a letter as that; but the Convention refused the respite. It granted permission to see his family, and a priest; and to his petition for the subsequent safety of his wife and children, it replied in terms which it probably did not mean for mockery, though the fate really reserved for them gave the promise that appearance, that "the French nation, as great in its beneficence as it was rigorous in its justice, would take care of his family, and arrange for them a suitable destiny."

Even these, his last moments, the municipal council persisted in embittering with severities that outran the enmity of the Convention. That body had resolved that, as he had requested, there should be no witnesses to the interview between those who were to meet on earth no more: that no prying or indifferent strangers should check the freedom of the last confidences that were to pass between the dying man and the still more hapless survivors. But the council adhered to their regulations that the guard should not lose sight of Louis by day nor by night; and all that was finally allowed him was to retire to a chamber with a glass door, and to close that, so that the soldiers might see all that took place, though unable to hear. The priest whom Louis selected was one who had long been the

vicar-general of Paris, and his sister's confessor, a gentleman of Irish extraction named Edgeworth, who, perilous as was the honour thus done him by the king's choice, accepted it thankfully and hastened to obey the summons to his presence. Even him those who had the custody of the royal prisoner could contrive to insult. He had been already refused leisure to clothe himself in his clerical robes, and when he reached the Temple the municipal officers subjected him to the most rigorous and offensive search. Louis received him joyfully though still calmly; but the sight of his royal master in such a condition overwhelmed him with sorrow so uncontrollable that for a moment the fortitude of Louis broke down under the contagion; and tears, which his impending death had been unable to draw from him, flowed freely at the sight of the frank and loyal sympathy of his pious servant. Edgeworth received his confession, and then retired for a while to an inner chamber, for the hour appointed for the visit of the royal family was at hand, and Louis wished to spare them the shock of seeing him in the company of the man, friend though he was, who was preparing him for death. He himself aided Cléry in arranging the room for their reception, still retaining such presence of mind that, perceiving that the water in a bottle placed on the table was iced, he ordered it to be changed, lest it might chill the queen if she happened to drink of it. At half-past eight in the evening they came: the queen would have passed on to an inner chamber, but Louis was forced to tell her that the indulgence of such privacy was denied to them, and while Cléry closed the glass door behind them and retired, the guards posted themselves so as to command a full sight of the whole family. Some sounds too they could hear, for the

sobs of the queen and the princess when, as it was conjectured, they first learnt from the king himself the sentence which had been passed on him, penetrated to their room, but no word of the king reached them, though it was manifest that he was often speaking. At a quarter past ten he rose from his seat and they prepared to leave him: he had need of the night for prayer and rest; but they extorted from him a promise that he would see them again in the morning. The dauphin was hardly old enough to realize to its full extent all that was happening and that was to happen; but his sister, some years older, fainted as she was separated from her father's embrace, and was carried out in a senseless state by her aunt, the Princess Elizabeth. After a brief conversation with Edgeworth Louis retired to rest, and, so perfectly had he recovered his composure, slept so soundly that when at five in the morning Cléry came by his order to call him, he found him sleeping tranquilly and soundly. He arose. He had besought Edgeworth to administer the communion to him on this his last day of life, and, though the magistrates to whom the abbé applied for permission insulted him once more with the pretended suspicion that he might be designing to poison the host which he was to consecrate, leave was at last given; and Louis was allowed the comfort of receiving the last and most solemn rite of the church. Edgeworth had persuaded him to forego his intention of having a second interview with his family, thinking it would prove a needless agony and trial for both, and fearing it might unman him in his last moments. And his devotions were hardly ended when the street outside began to resound with the movement of troops, the noise of drums, the heavy roll of the cannons; and Louis well knowing what the tumult portended ceased to speak,

and sat absorbed in pious meditation waiting for his summons.

The Convention and the council had omitted no precaution to ensure the undisturbed accomplishment of their crime. During the whole of the last week the whole city had been in a state of unprecedented agitation. Not only were the citizens in general horror-stricken when they found that it was really designed to put the king to death, but even in the assemblies of the sections the same feeling prevailed and was avowed extensively; and the Jacobin demagogues, whose superior violence had unhappily given them the ascendancy in those councils, could only preserve it by silencing some with menaces, expelling others,* and at times proceeding to acts of personal violence towards those who scorned their threats and denied their power of expulsion. And now, on this, the night which was to close the struggle, the victorious party suspected that they had need of both caution and resolution. A report had arisen that an attempt would be made to rescue the king on his way to the scaffold. It was groundless. There were many who would not have shrunk from such an enterprise, far more, no doubt, than those who were bent on his death; but they had neither organization nor leaders. And though, as the procession of death passed on, a knot of four or five young men tried to force their way to the carriage in which the king was seated, and shouted out for aid to rescue him,† their failure to obtain the slightest support proved that the precautions taken by the leaders of the Convention were prompted rather by their own sense of their iniquity than by any project formed by their adversaries to defeat them.

* "La Terreur," v. 419. † "History of the Girondins," xxxv. 20.

But however groundless, or perhaps feigned, were their fears, they paraded them as if they wished to make a merit with the nation of the difficulty and danger of executing what they declared to be the national sentence. A vast escort of troops of all kinds was under arms to clear the prisoner's way to the scaffold. A still more numerous force lined the streets than that which had been under arms on the day of his examination. While further to prevent the possibility of any attempt at a rescue being made, an edict was issued strictly forbidding any citizen from showing himself in any street which opened on the road of the procession, or from appearing at the windows. The square around the scaffold, as being one which all but the most hardened would avoid, was the only spot where spectators were allowed to assemble.

As the hour approached, Louis called Cléry to give him his last commission. It was to deliver a seal to the dauphin; a ring which he took from his finger to the queen; a small portion of his hair to his sister and his daughter. He had wished that Cléry should cut his hair, as he understood would be necessary; but the council forbade him; that work was generally done by the executioner; and they would not spare him a single indignity.

At nine o'clock Santerre rudely opened the door and entered the king's apartment, followed by Roux, a renegade priest, and one or two more of the municipal council, as a deputation from the whole body. Louis understood their object. "Is it time?" "Yes," said Santerre. "Wait for me a minute," replied the king; and retiring to his bedchamber, he once more knelt before Edgeworth, entreated and received his blessing. He returned with his will in his hand.

He held it out to Roux; "I beg you," said he, "to deliver this paper to the queen." He corrected himself, "to my wife." "That is no business of mine," said the ruffian; "I am sent to conduct you to the scaffold." Louis handed it to another, with permission to read it first to the municipal council, and then turned to Santerre. "Let us go." They went downstairs. At the foot he saw one of the porters whom he had reproved the day before; he asked his pardon. "I fear," said he, "I was somewhat sharp to you yesterday; forgive me." He entered the carriage, accompanied by his confessor, and attended by Roux and another commissioner. Not a word was spoken. Edgeworth put a breviary into his hand, and pointed out to him the prayers prescribed for the use of the dying. The guillotine was in the place at the end of the gardens of the Tuilleries, formerly bearing the name of his grandfather Louis XV.; but now his statue had been thrown down from its pedestal, and replaced by an image of liberty; and the square had been re-named the Place of the Revolution. And though the carriage was above an hour reaching it, Louis never took his eyes from the sacred volume, but was so absorbed in its contents that it was only by the sudden stoppage that he perceived that he had arrived at the foot of the scaffold. He looked up. "This," said he, inquiringly, "is the place?" He was told that it was. He finished the prayer which he was reading, returned the book to Edgeworth, begged the guards to protect him from harm, and at once dismounted.

The executioner, a man named Sanson, with his assistants, was in readiness. The assistants advanced towards Louis, but he waved them back; and with his own hands took off his coat and his neckcloth, and turned down the collar of his shirt Once more he

knelt before the priest for his blessing. As he rose from his knees the executioner's men laid hold of him to bind his hands. For one moment the spirit of his ancestors rose up in his veins. "That," said he, "is an insult I will never submit to." "Yield, sire," said the meek though undaunted Edgeworth; "it is thus that they bound your Saviour before you." Without another word the king held out his hands. The men bound them, and cut his hair. He advanced to the edge of the scaffold. "Frenchmen," said he, "I die innocent; I pardon my slayers: I pray God that no vengeance for my blood may fall upon this nation." The executioners fearing he was about to make a long speech, seized and fastened him to the fatal plank. "Son of St. Louis!" exclaimed Edgeworth, as he was placed beneath the knife; "son of St. Louis, ascend to heaven!" The knife fell, and all was over. An executioner lifted up the head and showed it to those around: the most prominent figure among the spectators being the infamous Egalité, who viewed the whole scene from his cabriolet, and who, while thus exulting in the success of his five years' plot against his kinsman, little anticipated that the day was not far distant when his own blood would stain the same scaffold, while he would not have the consolations that had so wonderfully supported him who now lay lifeless before him.

Thus lamentably perished the only French sovereign for more than five hundred years who, whether in his private life, or in his love for his people, had been absolutely blameless. His one fault had been that he had loved them not wisely but too well. He had been like a too-indulgent father. He had granted all their requests, without considering whether they had the wisdom and sober-mindedness requisite to

enable them to profit by, not to abuse his indulgence. He had refrained from all measures of chastisement or even of coercion, without considering that to restrain or chastise the immoderate desires of a few unruly spirits might be a duty which, as king of the whole nation, he owed to those of better regulated judgment and less distempered ambition. By this ill-timed lenity, which in a ruler of a people is weakness, he had in fact abdicated his authority before it was wrested from him. But it was his only fault. They were the iniquities of his forefathers that he was doomed to expiate, not his own; and no heavier atonement was ever exacted. That at his accession France was suffering under pernicious and intolerable abuses no one saw more clearly, or at all events no one acknowledged more forcibly than he. Nor did any one else show a greater resolution to remedy them. For the relief of his people he freely gave up privileges and prerogatives which had been always looked upon as the inalienable right of the crown, and the people, if they had been left to themselves, would have gratefully appreciated his concessions and character as they have since been appreciated by a generation certainly not imbued with any superfluous or excessive reverence for royalty. Unhappily at the time they gave themselves up to the guidance of a body of profligate and selfish demagogues who persuaded them not to be contented with the removal of abuses, but to aim at the acquisition of political power; and a struggle for power could hardly fail to terminate in the overthrow of the party weakest in numbers. How little cause the people, how little cause even the demagogues who for a time maddened and ruled them, had to congratulate themselves on their victory, both learnt with unusual rapidity.

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